PLATONIC DIALECTICS AND SCHLEIERMACHER'S THOUGHT

An Essay towards the Reinterpretation of Schleiermacher

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Abstract.

This dissertation undertakes to deal with the problem of an adequate interpretation of Schleiermacher. He has usually been interpreted in terms of German idealism - critical and speculative - but this approach has failed to understand his work as a unity. The thesis which is here developed and defended is that Schleiermacher can be interpreted more adequately if he is read in the light of Plato.

This approach seems possible, to begin with, when it is recalled that Schleiermacher laid the ground for the translation and interpretation of Plato early in his career and that he was engaged in this work throughout the remainder of his life. Very little attention has been given to this phase of Schleiermacher's work in the many publications about him because almost no one has undertaken to understand him as essentially a Platonic thinker. A detailed account of his work on Plato is therefore necessary, and this presentation seeks to supply it in the second chapter. It is generally held that Schleiermacher initiated the era of modern Plato research in Germany. He sought above all to demonstrate the interrelation of form and content in the Platonic dialogue, and, from this approach, contended that the central principle of Plato's philosophy is Socratic dialectics.

At one time Schleiermacher conceived it as his task to revive Platonic philosophizing through a direct imitation of the dialogues. The Weihnachtsfeier is such an attempt. An analysis of this work shows that it contains strongly Platonizing tendencies. This is the more noteworthy since it reaffirms and reformulates the"program" of developing a religious culture which Schleiermacher had set forth in the Reden and which was further developed in terms of the "contract between faith and science" in the major works of his mature period.

The Weihnachtsfeier is the only dialogue which Schleiermacher wrote. Instead of continuing to imitate Plato directly he turned to reflection upon the ultimate principles at the basis of Platonic philosophy. In his hermeneutics he reflected upon the nature of dialogic communication of thought. These reflections led him to the question of the origin of thought.

Schleiermacher held that dialectics is the twin discipline to hermeneutics, the science of interpretation. It undertakes to analyze the origin of thought as the gaining of knowledge through dialogue. All thinking is dialogue. No one part of knowledge is absolute. The dialogue is a situation of strife between conflicting ideas. Yet, strife presupposes an ultimate, embracing truth, implicit to thinking. Dialectics as a "theory of the art of skilful conversation"(i.e. of dialogue) has the task of bringing these principles to light. It develops the highest opposites of the real and the ideal which are paralleled by the two poles of thought, namely the intellectual function and the organic function which in turn are present within the dialogue as concept and judgement. The ultimate unity of all the opposites is in the transcendent ground which is represented as actual ground of the dialogue in the relative identity of thought and will, namely in what Schleiermacher designates as "feeling". Feeling is immediate selfconsciousness as the awareness of absolute dependence.

Feeling as selfconsciousness and consciousness of dependence is at the center of the dialogue, according to Schleiermacher's analysis. In Plato this central point is paralleled by the interpenetration of eros and thought. Eros as the inner urge moves the dialectic process beyond itself to the vision of the good. The congruence of the central elements in both thinkers' thought is assessed by a comparison of their polemics against the autonomy of man and of their view on the nature of "religious science".

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NOTE

1. If not otherwise indicated, quotations are taken from the Reimer edition of Schleiermacher's works. It is referred to as "Werke."

2. Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen is referred to as "Briefe."

3. Schleiermacher's Platon is quoted from the 2d ed. When the translation of Dobson is used, the page reference is put in parentheses alongside of the reference in the German original.

4. On crucial points the German original is given in the footnotes. The spelling of the text is retained in spite of its antiquated character.

CHAPTER I

GERMAN IDEALISM AND PLATO AS MEDIA FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF SCHLEIERMACHER

A. Interpretation in the light of Schelling and Kant

The following study is an attempt to show some of the importance of Platonic streams in Schleiermacher's thought. In particular it seeks to show that Schleiermacher's dialectics exhibits basically Platonic principles and modes of thought.

The wide and strong interest in Schleiermacher which was evident around the turn of the century declined when the "dialectical" theology of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner began to make its impact felt. After a short period of neglect a new increase in Schleiermacher research has recently become discernible. During the course of this study we shall have occasion to note the change of attitude in these recent approaches. At this time it is necessary only to consider briefly the nature of those interpretations which were current in the earlier period and which still prevail in a good many theologian's and philosopher's discussions of Schleiermacher.

It has been customary to interpret Schleiermacher by and large in the context of German idealism, either in its speculative or in its criticistic manifestations; one has approximated Schleiermacher either to Schelling or to Kant. Be-

cause of the nature of Schleiermacher's work much of the discussion has to center around his concept of immediate selfconsciousness or - as he refers to it more often - the concept of "feeling." This concept is so central for Schleiermacher that practically all interpretation depends upon its proper understanding. In a general sense one can say that the discussion of the relation between religion and science, between theology and philosophy in Schleiermacher's work is only an amplified discussion of his concept of feeling. In this initial discussion one may, therefore, raise the question of how this central concept is understood if it is read in the light of Schelling or in the light of Kant.

Emil Brunner understands Schleiermacher as a philosopher of identity very close to Schelling. Brunner defines the purpose of his book on Schleiermacher as that of helping to "eliminate the leaven of Schleiermacher and of speculative idealism from theology."[1] Brunner's own theological thinking is strongly influenced by Kant, which accounts for his animosity toward what he considers to be speculative idealism. Even though Brunner claims "not to use Kantian philosophy as a crutch or even as a basis" for his theology, he still holds that the "criticistic

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[1]Emil Brunner, Die Mystik und das Wort: Der Gegansatz zwischen moderner Religionsauffassung und christlichem Glauben dargestellt an der Theologie Schleiermachers (2d ed.; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928), p. iii.

philosophy of Kant, as the only attempt of a truly critical philosophy, approximates the Christian faith." It follows from this view "that the Christian congregation . . . must try to carry on truly critical philosophy."[2] Brunner, therefore, has an appreciation for Schleiermacher's Dialektik in so far as its "basic thought, the unapproachableness of the divine by human action, is just as much critical as it is Christian." Yet, much to Brunner's distress, the Dialektik "adds the fatal doctrine of feeling. After Schleiermacher victoriously conquered the titanism of idealistic philosophy of immanence, he now himself falls into the hands of a theory of identity which is much worse in kind." Brunner interprets Schleiermacher's formula that "in feeling the unity of the ideal and the real has been reached, a unity which is only presupposed in action and in thought" as meaning that "the absolute has been reached, that God is man." This, says Brunner, is the worst kind of the doctrine of God's immanence and the seemingly criticistic start was only a preparation for the bad ending. According to Brunner, Schleiermacher is a philosopher of identity of Schelling's school. Schleiermacher's kind of theory of immanence is cognate to "romanticism and to mysticism. Schelling called it intuition, Schleiermacher called it feeling."[3]

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[2] Ibid., p. iv.

[3] Ibid. (1st ed.; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1924), pp. 202-203.

In approximating Schleiermacher's "feeling" to Schelling's "identity of identity" Brunner follows Sueskind, whose interpretation of Schleiermacher he accepts as generally correct. In his book, Der Einfluss Schellings auf die Entwicklung Schleiermachers, Sueskind had based his argument for the Schellingesque interpretation of Schleiermacher's basic concept mainly upon the earlier writings. He believed that Schleiermacher's attempt to show that there is no true science and no true ethics apart from religion breaks down. Sueskind agrees with Schleiermacher in the assumption that knowing and acting may have the original identity of reason and nature, of thinking and being as their presupposition. "Yet," Sueskind then asks, "what has this identity to do with religion, described by Schleiermacher as the constant relating of our impressions to our being connected with the entirety of the world?" Schleiermacher's intention to base his principle of identity upon religious experience appears to Sueskind to be a "wholly untenable construct." To him the "mysterious moment" which Schleiermacher describes as the birth of religion in feeling[4] has nothing to do with religion, for it is only, if anything, an experience of the totality of our spiritual functions.[5]

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[4]Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ueber die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verachtern (Berlin: Unger, 1799), pp. 73 ff.

[5]Hermann Sueskind, Der Einfluss Schellings auf die Entwicklung Schleiermachers (Tuebingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1909), p. 273.

So both Brunner and Sueskind try to understand the center of Schleiermacher's thought in terms of Schelling's philosophy of identity. Brunner, as theologian, claims that in this central concept an illegitimate transition from philosophy to theology has been made. Sueskind, as philosopher, claims that philosophy has unduly been based upon religious experience. If this understanding of feeling in terms of Schelling were correct, both arguments could stand with justification. Before we enter into a criticism of this interpretation, it is necessary to point out the other way in which Schleiermacher has been interpreted, namely through Kant.

Dilthey holds that "the basis of Schleiermacher's system must be sought in Kant's critical reformation of philosophy."[6] It seems to Dilthey that Schleiermacher took for granted "without gratitude" the critical insights of Kant in "the sphere of whose influence Schleiermacher grew up." Dilthey, indeed, sees in Schleiermacher a strong animus against Kant's positive world view. When it comes to ethics and theology, then Schleiermacher is not a Kantian; his epistemology, however, Dilthey believes, is Kantian in principle.[7]

Georg Wehrung, who wrote a very penetrating commentary

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[6]Wilhelm Dilthey, Leben Schleiermacher's (2d ed.; Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1922), p. 111.

[7]See below for a more detailed discussion of Dilthey's view.

on Schleiermacher's Dialektik, follows a similar line. He comments on the draft of 1822 that here is "no longer any talk about the 'congruity' of thinking and being." It seems to Wehrung that now "the subjectification of thinking has become all-pervasive, which means that everything has now been more strictly subordinated to the demands of criticistic philosophy."[8] He holds that Schleiermacher's immediate selfconsciousness approaches Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. Schleiermacher's "feeling," according to Wehrung's interpretation, is not "an empirical phenomenon, it has only the value of an a priori." Like Kant's transcendental apperception, feeling "equals the 'I think' and - we may add - the 'I act' of criticistic philosophy which must accompany all our imagination."[9]

It is evident even from such a brief exposition that both these interpretations exclude one another. Either feeling is a Kantian a priori in which case it cannot be given in experience or feeling is the identity of thinking and acting, corresponding to being, in which case it cannot be of transcendental character. Yet, to get at the heart of the problem we must widen the scope of our inquiry.

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[8]Georg Wehrung, Die Dialektik Schleiermacher's (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1920), p. 169.

[9]Ibid., pp. 200-201.

B. The inadequacies of this interpretation

The inadequacies of interpretations which see Schleiermacher as basically dependent either upon Kant or upon Schelling can ultimately be shown only as a result of this study. At this time, however, we may ask to what extent Schleiermacher himself points us toward a different direction when he speaks about Kant and speculative idealism or about the intentions of his own work.

First of all it should be pointed out that it is basically correct to point toward Schelling as well as toward Kant as strong influences upon Schleiermacher. As Dilthey has shown, Schleiermacher spent an entire decade before the turn of the century with studies of Kant's works. In Dilthey's judgment Schleiermacher "learned to think" through his studies of Kant. Yet, at the same time, Schleiermacher felt greatly repelled by Kant. Most of his early writings, much of which are concerned with studies of ethical problems, exhibit a polemical attitude toward Kant. This attitude stays with Schleiermacher to the end of his life.

The result of Kant's philosophizing was a relation among the sciences, "offending Schleiermacher's eye which had been trained by Plato and Spinoza." To anyone who conceives of the universe as a moral cosmos the results of Kant's philosophy makes the impression "of an organic body, disintegrated by poisons."[10]

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[10] Dilthey, op. cit., p. 107.

What are these results? Metaphysics is concerned with external nature a priori. Psychology is removed into the field of empirical inquiry. History is divided between empiricism and some kind of teleology. Ethics is separated from all of this by its own a priori. Schleiermacher - for whom any such division of reality and of the sciences concerned with the various segments of reality had constituted a source of irritation from his earliest years in school[11] - summed up his criticism of Kant in his "Criticism of the Previous Systems of Ethics."

Schleiermacher finds it remarkable how in Kant's philosophy "a subordination of both the practical and the theoretical systems appears quite unexpectedly under the rule of fantasy, while the unity of both remains unattained. Yet fantasy is denounced everywhere where the spirit of this philosophy expresses itself freely and with consideration." Schleiermacher's criticism fastens on Kant's ideas of immortality and of God, which are both postulates of practical reason and of which God is one of the regulative ideas for theoretical reason. Now, says Schleiermacher, Kant himself admits that happiness is a product of fantasy; yet, in Kant the ideas of immortality and of God are introduced in the practical realm only for the sake of happiness. "Since in the theoretical realm neither one has been created by rational means, there is only one way about it, and that is that

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[11] Ibid., p. 11.

everywhere they depend for their existence upon the workings of fantasy."[12]

It is characteristic of Schleiermacher's own intentions that he summarizes his critique of Kant by pointing out that his ethics have no basis in reality. He holds that "Kant only found ethics already in existence. He would not have had the thought of producing one by himself. This is evident from the fact that he always strives to show that ethics must not be based upon a concept of human nature. . . . It is evident furthermore from the fact that he never bothers to show what is at the basis of his expression of the moral law; he derives the plurality and community of rational beings from nowhere, and yet, this presupposition is so essential that without it a law could be only a dark oracle."[13] We can surmise from this criticism that Schleiermacher thinks of ethics as part of or at least as grounded in ontology. It is difficult to imagine that at the center of Schleiermacher's epistemological and metaphysical speculation should be a concept which, similar to Kant's transcendental ego, denies the knowledge of the essential structure of human nature. We must therefore assume that either Schleiermacher's work suffers from great internal discrepancies or that a Kantian interpretation of Schleiermacher is inadequate.

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[12]Schleiermacher, "Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre," Friedrich Schleiermachers saemmtliche Werke (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1835-64), Part III; I, 23.

[13]Loc. cit.

In his polemics against Kant, Schleiermacher uses modes of thought which remind one strongly of the early Schelling. It is furthermore evident - and it is the merit of Sueskind's study to have shown this - that Schleiermacher was at one time in his life influenced by Schelling's philosophy, especially by his philosophy of nature. Yet, the problem of interpretation is whether or not such influences are lasting and central. In Schleiermacher's own judgment they are not. After he had made his theological method public in the Christian Faith - a method which was intricately bound up with his concept of feeling - Schleiermacher had to defend himself against the charge of having fallen prey to speculative theology. Yet, even as early as 1806 - in the Weihnachtsfeier - he transcended speculative theology.

The Weihnachtsfeier is an amazingly concise work which - in all its brevity - summarizes the problems Schleiermacher had been wrestling with and anticipates much of his future work. The issue in the dialogue - the Weihnachtsfeier is modeled after Plato's Symposium - is the question in what respect the birth of Christ is the content of Christmas. The question is amplified to that of asking what Christ's role is in the Christian religion. There are three speeches which present a discussion of this problem. In their sequence they form a progression, starting with the frustrated attempt to find Christ still at the center when religion is understood within the limits of reason

alone, passing through a speculative attempt which tries to derive Christ from a concept won by philosophical speculation, culminating finally in the "mystical" acceptance of the Christ who is objectively given in history and who at the same time is ontically contained in the ultimate ground of the historically given.[14]

We shall return to the Weihnachtsfeier in the course of this study. At this time it is important to note that even though the speculative possibility is "nearer" to Schleiermacher than the criticistic possibility, he still transcends the solution offered by speculative idealism. In transcending it Schleiermacher exhibits the same objective which we have noted in his criticism of Kant; he is not content with abstract speculation. Philosophy and, of course, theology just as much as ethics or any kind of methodical inquiry must be grounded immediately in that which is actually given.

We arrive at the same results when we analyse Schleiermacher's defense of his theological method as set forth in his Sendschreiben an Luecke.[15] He there shows the dilemma in which Christian theology finds itself when it follows the precepts of Kant's critique. He asks whether the theologians really want to go through with their attempt to ethicise Christianity and so to narrow their faith in Christ to moralism. "Try it out," says

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[14]Schleiermacher, Die Weihnachtsfeier: Ein Gespraech (Halle: Schimmelpfennig, 1806), pp. 100 ff.

[15]Schleiermacher, "Zweites Sendschreiben an Luecke," Werke, Part I, II, 614 ff.

Schleiermacher, "whether or not you can leave aside that which has been the real source of Christianity up to this time, namely the faith in divine revelation in the person of Jesus from which revelation everyone can and should receive over and over again powerful, heavenly life; try it out whether you can do with that Jesus who since some time wanders around quite honorably either as the wise man from Nazareth or as the simple rabbi from the country." For Schleiermacher these attempts of the early life-of-Christ-theology are an attempt to save whatever can be saved within the Kantian frame of reference. It seems to Schleiermacher that they - like the bases for Kant's speculations - are removed from reality since the Jesus which they envisage has little if anything to do with the source of the Christian religion as we know it.

Now, says Schleiermacher, there has been suggested another way out of the dilemma. This way too does not come to terms with the historical reality of Christ, although "this road is built much more loftily and so stately that from here one can look down upon this [Kantian] way out just as much as upon the conventional route of marching." This higher road, says Schleiermacher, is the one on which he has supposedly been seen, "yet, it was only my ghost, my double; I refer to speculative theology." Schleiermacher admits that there is an apparent similarity between the principles of this theology and the principle of his dogmatics. He refers to the "high sounding sentences" that human nature and

divine nature are not separated in themselves and that the divine nature is the truth of human nature while the human nature is the reality of divine nature. And when we read that in the person of Jesus Christ this unity of God is revealed, and is real as something that has occurred, "then this may, I think, be taken as a beautiful and true expression of our faith. If I then, however, read that this truth has its ground in the concept of the idea of God and of man or in knowledge, then - with due respect for the depth of this speculation - I must return to my position that I cannot accept this as the ground for the conviction of my faith in those truths."

Even though these speculative formulas about the relation between divine and human nature may be taken as an expression of Schleiermacher's philosophy - but even this, says Schleiermacher, should not be implied - still the third sentence concerning the nature of Christ "is at best a formula expressing the relation of this philosophy to the [Christian] faith." "Never shall I agree to it that my faith in Christ stems from philosophy, whether it is this philosophy or another one."

Asking for Schleiermacher's reasons for his rejection of "the speculative way out" we find as an answer the same principle which we have found in his rejection of Kant's ethical system containing Kant's positive world view, as well as in his rejection of any attempt to model the Christian faith within the limits of reason alone. In either case Schleiermacher's contention is that

the respective systems of thought are not grounded in the nature of the reality they profess to bring to light and to uphold. Schleiermacher muses upon what he would do if he had to choose between "throwing the origin of Christianity in with the infinite collection of common experiences" (Kant) or "taking his faith as a lien from a speculation." He comes to the conclusion that he would probably choose the latter. Nevertheless, says Schleiermacher, "the best joy would have been lost, had I to give myself an account of how the truth of the absolute sonship to God in the person of Jesus is to have its certainty in theoretical knowledge. I furthermore am afraid that no more would remain of the historical person of the savior than what remains according to that Ebionite [life-of-Christ-theology] view. If I furthermore think of myself as teacher in the congregation, then I feel strongly attracted by the other side." Schleiermacher can not imagine that he as philosopher has the true basis of the faith in his speculations while the congregation by and large has no access to it. "I would have to take their faith as groundless and only as groundless could I intend to strengthen it. To sum it all up: speculative theology threatens us with the opposites of an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine, quite in contradiction to Christ's utterances, where He desires that all should be instructed by God."

In this passage - as in most of Schleiermacher's writings - the basic principles of his entire work can be detected; and furthermore one can sense how his thinking is pervaded immedi-

ately by the complex flux of life in the midst of which it is carried out. Speculative theology must be wrong, for it leads away from what Schleiermacher had come to see to be the living fountain for the Christian faith. It leads away from the historical person of the savior and it leads away from the depth of faith in which the conviction in Christ's saving activity is grounded. At the same time Schleiermacher argues from his particular role in the midst of the congregation in which the faith in Christ is realized. The three foci of his theology which ultimately merge into one become apparent: Christ, the faith in Christ and the Church as the body of believers. None of these elements can be represented by an abstract concept; Schleiermacher's concepts always participate in the formal and dynamic structure of the reality which is symbolized through these concepts. Speculation for Schleiermacher is necessary to gain understanding of reality, yet reality always precedes speculation.

Again we must ask whether it is plausible to assume that Schleiermacher at his center is at one with Schelling. To equate Schleiermacher's "feeling" with Schelling's intuition means to create the same dilemma in which we found ourselves when it was equated with Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. Either Schleiermacher's work suffers from great internal discrepancies and ultimately defeats Schleiermacher's own intentions or the interpretation of Schleiermacher as being at his core at one with Schelling does not really penetrate to the center of Schleiermacher's work; as Schleiermacher says, it is not concerned with

him but only with his ghost.

C. A new possibility: Schleiermacher interpreted in the light of Plato

The first two paragraphs of this chapter have given examples of interpretations of Schleiermacher which to a large degree have conditioned and still do condition the common portraits drawn of the philosopher-theologian. Their inadequacy has been briefly discussed. By what method and means can we arrive at a more intelligible understanding of the man's thoughts and interests?

The interpretation of a thinker will always have to focus on two major complexes. One is the work of the thinker itself, the other is the context to which it belongs. To know both these complexes and to see them in their interrelation is to understand a thinker and to present this understanding is to interpret him. At this time we shall not enter into a discussion of the hermeneutic problem, namely how the whole can be understood, since we have access only to the parts and never can know the whole except through the parts, while at the same time a genuine understanding of the parts presupposes a knowledge of the whole. We also need not discuss the question how one gains an appreciation of the context in which a thinker stands, a problem equal in difficulty to the one just cited, for here again something is presupposed which is at the same time the object of inquiry.

Leaving aside these difficult discussions at this time, one may say that that interpretation serves its purpose which illuminates the work of a thinker most clearly. Interpretations which precede new ones have shed light upon a man's work, light without which new approaches were not possible. In the case of Schleiermacher research, for example, no interpreter can disregard the extraordinarily meritorious study of Dilthey, which, like the studies of Wehrung and Sueskind (mentioned above), has greatly furthered our understanding of Schleiermacher. Yet, partly because other interpreters open up insights which they themselves have not made explicit, and partly because each man and each generation has a different point from which matters are viewed, there are aspects and phases in a thinker's work which do not quite fit into the limits of such earlier interpretations and thus new approaches have to be tried out. One can never be quite sure whether one is absolutely on the right track or not; sometimes a new approach is a regress behind earlier ones instead of a progress. Yet this chance must be taken. Interpretation involves trust in the approach chosen and at the same time it involves an awareness of the relativity of any approach. Often those interpreters bring the most illuminating results who, with all their confidence in the approach chosen, are yet suspicious of it since they always envisage the possibility of its possible inadequacy. The goal of interpretation, needless to say, is not to supplant the object but to lead to the object. Interpretation cannot be more but it should not be less.

It is obvious that in whatever way the one side of the hermeneutic problem is solved, the other side will find a similar solution. In other words, the way in which a man's work is understood determines what must be considered as the context in which it stands, and vice versa.

According to Sueskind's opinion one must understand Schleiermacher's work as depending largely upon his early writings. Sueskind suggests that in the first and in the second edition of the Reden Schleiermacher's real intentions can be found, while "it is difficult to recognize them in their later developments."[16] By "later developments" Sueskind means the various drafts of the Dialektik, beginning with the year 1811. His observation that matters get more and more complex the longer Schleiermacher works on a problem is correct. Yet this does not necessarily imply that the early writings must therefore serve as the basis of interpretation, that in them the spirit of the whole finds its clearest expression.

This approach which Sueskind suggests is followed by Brunner and is almost a standard practice among theologians in general. The Reden and the Christian Faith seem to form the canon of Schleiermacher's writings. His Dialektik is viewed as something like an apocryphal work which is either not taken into

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[16]Sueskind, op. cit., p. 273.

consideration at all or which is interpreted in the light of the Reden. Yet this approach must not necessarily be fully adequate. To take Kant as an example, one may point out that the early period of a thinker does not always represent his interests which he exhibits in his mature work. One would not take Kant's dissertation, for instance, and take its Wolffian tendencies as principles for an interpretation of the mature Kant. Or, to take another example, one no longer interprets Plato exclusively in the light of his Republic. This dialogue, one of his earlier works, had for a long time been considered his most mature dialogue and had thus served to provide the principles by which the other dialogues were understood. Only during the course of further research did one discover that it was the Parmenides, a later work than the Republic, which opened the road to a new understanding of Plato's greatest period containing the Sophist and the Timaeus. Now Plato's earlier dialogues are read and understood in terms of this later development. It seems hardly necessary to do more than to mention the names of Augustine, Schelling, Coleridge and Newman in this context.

In distinction from the approaches cited above we believe and shall try to prove that Schleiermacher's work culminated in his Dialektik and, more precisely, in his Dialektik as drafted in 1822. If this assumption is right, then it follows that the early writings should be read in their relation to the Dialektik rather than the other way around. Sueskind's observation that in the

Dialektik matters grew more and more complex with each new lecture is right. Yet one may ask whether or not something is unfolding itself which is not so clearly stated in the earlier writings because there it has not been sufficiently differentiated and stated critically enough.

In the Dialektik Schleiermacher's thought becomes conscious of itself, conscious of its own inner principles. It outlines the origin and development of "that mysterious operation, the gaining of knowledge as bearing in its living nucleus the basic principles of its full grown structure."[17] The Dialektik is truly an organon in Aristotle's sense. If one takes the Dialektik as one's point of departure rather than the Reden, this has an immediate impact on the understanding of the Christian Faith. Immediately after Schleiermacher had finished this principal theological work he returns to his studies in dialectics, and he works out the most mature lecture on this subject which we have, the Dialektik of 1822. It seems plausible that there exists an immediate interrelation between the two works. As Wehrung suggests, "this important document gives an unadulterated insight into the merely conceptual basis of the theological system; it is in a way the esoteric complement to the exoteric presentation."[18]

Now we come to the other question: What is the general context in which Schleiermacher should be read? Which thinker or

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[17]Schleiermacher, Werke, Part III; III, 5.

[18]Wehrung, op.cit., p. 162.

which period was he most deeply related to? In a way this question resembles that of asking what mode of thought Schleiermacher exhibits.

In general this question has been answered by pointing to German idealism. Yet there are other possibilities. A thinker is not necessarily dependent on what seems to be the climate of his day, even though this seems to be the obvious answer. Schleiermacher himself points out that there are periods when a certain kind of philosophizing is most prevalent in a nation, but that even then "there are always some who philosophize differently even though they do not appear in public because they cannot expect to have success; they rather keep what they have as their own good and as their own manner."[19] Schleiermacher is one of those who philosophized differently from his age. He did appear in public with his philosophy, yet he had no success. He has never been taken with real seriousness as a philosopher because he has been treated mostly as if he were a dilletante in the field of philosophy who had got lost somewhere between Kant and Hegel or Fichte and Schelling.

Yet there are other possibilities. If one fastens one's attention on Schleiermacher's Dialektik, then one begins to see that, although he is quite conscious of living in the period of

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[19]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, ed. Rudolf Odebrecht (Leipzig: Preussische Akademieausgabe, 1942), p. 81.

German idealism, he nevertheless has access to sources that are not generally accessible to his time. It is Plato's philosophy - the spirit of his dialectic and the tacit and open assumptions about nature, man and God which are bound up with this kind of dialectic - which forms the ground on which Schleiermacher stands, as far as our understanding of the problem goes. It seemed for a time - both Dilthey and Wehrung followed this lead - that Schleiermacher's Dialektik is basically Kantian. Meanwhile we have gained an insight into Schleiermacher's Dialektik - mainly due to the penetrating analysis of these and other scholars - which points us more and more beyond the limits of his day and to Plato, whom he knew as maybe no one in modern times before him and maybe very few after him. If it can really be shown that Schleiermacher can be understood better in terms of Plato rather than in terms of his immediate philosophical contemporaries, then a new appreciation for his work may arise. If it can be shown that Schleiermacher is not helplessly lost between the various systems of his time - for with the same right as he may be called a Kantian he may be called a follower of Schelling, Fichte or Hegel - but that he is rooted rather in Plato, an Archimedian point lying beyond his immediate era, then his work may begin to bear new fruits, philosophically as well as theologically. One may then understand that what seemed to be irreconcilable contradictions are actually powerful reconciliations of opposites held together by that spiritual strength and infinitely penetrating dialectical inquiry and speculation which he shares with Plato

and which he developed in his hermeneutic concern for the Platonic dialogue.

D. Plan of procedure

Our inquiry into Schleiermacher's relation to Plato takes four steps, according to which the chapters are arranged.

Chapter II deals with Schleiermacher's translation and interpretation of Plato. Section A treats his preoccupation with Plato in the form of a brief biographical sketch which depicts that period of his life in which the plan for the translation of Plato was conceived and the decisive views on nature of this philosopher's thought were developed. Section B deals with the nature of this interpretation. It shows Schleiermacher's emphasis on Socratic dialectics as the essential principle which pervades all of Plato's philosophy and which serves as key for an understanding of his dialogues as a harmonious whole.

Chapter III gives an analysis of the Weihnachtsfeier and of the hermeneutics. In the Weihnachtsfeier Schleiermacher strove to produce a dialogue which was supposed to appropriate the Platonic mode of philosophizing by means of imitating the Platonic dialogue. Although the Weihnachtsfeier does not render satisfactory results, according to Schleiermacher's own judgment, it yet exhibits certain Platonic modes of thought, which is all the more important since it incorporates those questions

which may be considered to be the "program" of his entire work. The hermeneutics moves away from an immediate imitation of the Platonic dialogue. It tackles the problem of communication and interpretation. It is related to the interpretation of Plato in a double way: On the one hand, the translation is the actual instance of interpretation on which Schleiermacher reflects when he develops his theory of interpretation; on the other hand, he defines the nature of communication and interpretation in those terms which he has found in the dialogues of Plato. The quest for the nature of communication leads to the question of the nature of the creation of thought, which problem is treated in the twin science of hermeneutics, namely in the dialectics.

Chapter IV deals with these dialectics as developed in the Dialektik. Here again, Schleiermacher takes his point of departure from the dialogue. All thought is in dialogue; no absolute knowledge can be reached, but thinking is directed toward undisputable knowledge. Section A deals with this point of departure. Section B deals with the ultimate center of the dialogue to which this dialectics leads, namely with "immediate selfconsciousness" or "feeling." Dialectics culminates in the knowledge of the "highest opposite" which is overcome in the immediate awareness of its transcendent unity, manifested in "feeling."

Chapter V poses the question in what respects this center of the dialogue can be understood in Platonic terms. A comparison of the historic situations of the two thinkers, of their mutual interpretation of their situation, as well as of their mutual understanding of the task of philosophy, shows in which way the very center of Schleiermacher's dialectics can be understood as coinciding with that of Plato. The conclusion discusses the relevancy of Schleiermacher in the contemporary scene.

CHAPTER II

SCHLEIERMACHER'S INTERPRETATION OF PLATO

A. Schleiermacher's preoccupation with Plato

The circumstances under which Schleiermacher began his work on Plato - a work which he kept up to the end of his life - throw much light on the intricate relation which exists between Plato's and Schleiermacher's thinking, yes, one may even say between Plato and Schleiermacher themselves. Unfortunately, only little research has been done on Schleiermacher's studies in Plato.[1] However, considerable information is available, espe-

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[1]Hermann Mulert reprints several studies on the subject which had been undertaken by W. Dilthey (Leben Schleiermacher's, pp. 645 ff.). Unfortunately these studies remained unfinished, although they furnish a considerable amount of information. Again and again one can find references to Schleiermacher's Plato translation throughout the literature on both thinkers, yet it seems as if no exhaustive study of the subject has been published. Thus, e.g., Joachim Wach in his treatment of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics mentions the translation of Plato once (Verstehen, I, 91) but refers the reader to Dilthey and to Boekh's review. R. B. Brandt assumes some Platonic influences in Schleiermacher's thought; he gives a brief exposition of Schleiermacher's lectures on the history of philosophy (The Philosophy of Schleiermacher, p. 146). Constantin Ritter does not mention Schleiermacher at all. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff mentions him only very casually, although with admiration. Werner Jaeger refers to the importance of Schleiermacher's translation in greater detail. We shall refer to the more important statements further below. At this time it should be mentioned that we have no exhaustive critical study of Schleiermacher's translation and interpretation of Plato. The reason for the absence of such a study may partly be the fact that the importance of Plato for Schleiermacher's own work has not yet been generally investigated. Rudolf Odebrecht seems to be the only scholar who began research concerning this question. Un-

cially in Schleiermacher's own references, which furnish some basis for an appreciation of the extraordinary place which Plato occupied in Schleiermacher's life.

From 1796 to 1802 Schleiermacher had been a preacher at the Charite, a hospital in Berlin. During this period he had been in lively contact with the young romantics. In 1799 his famous Reden ueber die Religion had been published, a work which reflects all the life and sensitivity of the romantic period and which enshrines - although in undeveloped form, i.e., more as seeking than as presenting - the nucleus of his later work. In the same year Schleiermacher, together with Friedrich Schlegel, began his translation of Plato. Schlegel, however, soon began to show signs of disinterest, and he finally withdrew from the project. Through unfortunate circumstances Schleiermacher was forced to leave Berlin in 1802 and to accept a pastorate in Stolp, a little city in Pommerania, far removed from the stream of literary and academic life. This "exile" lasted until 1804. During that period Schleiermacher felt utterly lonely and forsaken. Contact with academic life was a necessary condition for his existence. Thus it was like salvation for him when, in the fall of 1804, he was appointed a professor at the young university of

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fortunately he died early; and, concerning this question, he has written only his introduction to Schleiermacher's Dialektik and an article on "The Spirit of Socrates in Schleiermacher's Work." Although it is evident from his writings that he is quite familiar with Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato, it is not within their scope to give an exhaustive and critical presentation of this interpretation.

Halle. There he began a new and fruitful activity. Studying and teaching, this was his world. In Halle he worked on many projects at the same time, preparing the ground for his future great works.

Yet even then his life was not free from disruptions and from disappointments. In 1805 his engagement was dissolved, an event which hurt him most deeply. His sorrow is reflected in Joseph's words in the Weihnachtsfeier, a sorrow which is overcome by faith in the savior. "Today [on Christmas] the deep, unvanishing pain is quieted as never. I feel newly born in the better world in which pain and lament have no place and no meaning."[2] But Schleiermacher still had his work. Together with his friends among the faculty and in the midst of his students he pursued his academic goals, an activity that gave meaning to his life. Above all, he was deeply pervaded by a sense of being instrumental in building at the moral basis of the life of his people.[3]

Yet "a great fate walks undecidedly up and down in our very neighborhood with steps under which the earth shakes, and we do not know how it also may seize us."[4] Only one year after

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[2]Schleiermacher, Weihnachtsfeier, p. 134.

[3]Wilhelm Dilthey, Aus Schleiermachers Leben in Briefen (4 vols.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1860-63), II, 78.

[4]Schleiermacher, Weihnachtsfeier, p. 56.

Schleiermacher wrote this sentence, not quite two years after he had moved to Halle, the dreadful event happened. Halle was the first Prussian city to fall prey to the conquering armies of Napoleon. Berlin was captured soon afterward. The king and queen had gone into exile. The country was defeated. Schleiermacher suffered under the fate of the nation, yet he still had to suffer a great personal shock. Napoleon closed the university of Halle. Schleiermacher's career as professor came to an abrupt end. Again he was faced with the disruption of his flourishing work. "What two birthdays[5] did I have to celebrate in succession," he wrote in a letter on December 1, 1806, "before the first one the blossom of my life fell off, before the second one the storm broke off the fruits. What is to happen to the base trunk?"[6] Yet, when Schleiermacher wrote in the same letter, "I think that God shall help me to a new field of work without which life would have lost its meaning," then his hope was not in vain. In 1808 he was called to be a minister at the Trinity Church in Berlin, and in 1810 he was appointed professor for theology at the newly founded university in the city.

During the tumultuous decade which finally came to its end with Schleiermacher's return to academic life in Berlin, he had produced the first five volumes of his Plato as his major

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[5]November 21st.

[6]Schleiermacher, Briefen, II, 80, 78.

work for this period. This work had established his fame as a classical scholar; therefore he was appointed as a member of the philosophical historical class of the academy of the sciences in 1810. This appointment was a full reward for the faithful work which Schleiermacher had carried out under rather adverse conditions. One can easily appreciate the sincerity in his words of gratitude with which he closed his inaugural address before the academy on May 10, 1810: "To know oneself as being a part of such a community is the best means for retaining the quiet dignity of the scholar, is the strongest impulse not to fall short of that which well-employed strength can achieve; the greatest one receives is the sure guarantee that one can find counsel and advice from fraternal insights when one's own do not suffice."[7] He remained professor at the university and member of the academy to the end of his life. His membership in the academy was for him invaluable, for this institution gathered within its walls the most renowned and able scholars of the time. Under the leadership of the two Humboldts and with the cooperation of Barthold G. Niebuhr, the historian, F. A. Wolf, the interpreter of Homer, and Schleiermacher it began a development without which the subsequent history of science, philosophy and art in Germany cannot be imagined. It was Schleiermacher, the interpreter of Plato, who had been appointed as a member of the academy, and most of

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[7]Schleiermacher, Werke, Part III, III, 8.

his important contributions to the life of the academy are in the field of Greek philosophy and in the field of hermeneutics.[8]

With the year 1810 began a period in Schleiermacher's life which was not hampered by external adversities. He had found a place in life which provided him with that stability and with those resources which made it possible for him to "employ his strength well." His work could now unfold into that complex structure which is before us today.

We have so far presented the general data of the decade during which Schleiermacher did his most extensive work on Plato. We now turn to the specific details, asking the question about the genesis of this undertaking and about Schleiermacher's own evaluation of it.

In a letter in April, 1799, Schleiermacher mentions: "Schlegel wrote me recently of a great coup (sic.) which he wants to carry out together with me; it is nothing less than translating Plato. Oh! it is a heavenly idea and I am convinced that

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[8] Schleiermacher's reports for the academy (Reden und Abhandlungen) are reprinted in the collected Werke, Part III, Vols II and III. Together with his treatments on ethical subjects, and on hermeneutics, the method of translation, and philological criticism, he lectured on Diogenes of Apollonia, Anaximander, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Democritus and Hippo. Furthermore, Schleiermacher produced an important study on the fragments of Heraclitus which in turn influenced other scholars of classical antiquity. (Dilthey, op.cit., p. 647) This study is reprinted in the collected Werke, Part III, Vol II. One may also mention that Schleiermacher even as a student engaged in translating parts of the Nichomachean ethics (cf. Richard B. Brandt, The Philosophy of Schleiermacher [New York and London: Harper, 1941] pp. 14 ff.). Brandt's work gives a rather exhaustive synopsis of all of Schleiermacher's writings.

few will be able to do it so well as we."[9] Friedrich Schlegel, always full of great plans, had asked Schleiermacher to join him in a German edition of Plato. This edition was not to be a mere translation but a critical edition, separating the genuine dialogues from those which are not actually Plato's, an edition which was to bring the Platonic dialogues into a meaningful pattern. This was indeed an ambitious plan, for practically no penetrating critical Plato-research of this kind had been undertaken before.[10]

The plan met with Schleiermacher's full concurrence. Even as school boy he had translated classical authors on his own. Now the opportunity presented itself to reach for the highest and to engage in this work together with a friend who was extraordinarily gifted. In Schleiermacher's opinion no one had so deep an appreciation for philology in its higher sense as had Friedrich Schlegel.[11] At the same time Schleiermacher could not find a more challenging project than that of really penetrating into the writings of Plato. He was just emerging from his long struggle with Kant. Now he was given the unique chance to devote

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[9]Schleiermacher, Briefe, I, 220.

[10]See below, Section B.

[11]Schleiermacher, Briefe, IV, 89-90, 71-72.

himself to that philosopher who has meant to him more than any other author.[12] "There is no author who has affected me so deeply and who has introduced me into the holy of holies not only of philosophy but of man in general, as has this divine man,"[13] i.e., Plato. "I am very excited, for I have been pervaded, more than words can say, by a devotion to Plato ever since I knew him."[14]

As this statement indicates, Schleiermacher's devotion to Plato had antedated his scholarly treatment of the dialogues. The fact that he felt greatly attracted by Plato, even before he had understood Plato's work as a whole[15] as well as the persistence with which he kept up this work for the rest of his life, suggest that in the Greek philosophers he had found a spirit kindred to his own. As Rudolf Odebrecht says, Schleiermacher's preoccupation with Plato "has its actual basis in a deep inner kinship between Schleiermacher and the Attic thinkers" while the long work on the translation of the Platonic dialogues has served as a means through which this inner kinship could become actualized.[16]

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[12] Ibid., I, 312.

[13] Ibid., IV, 72.

[14] Ibid., IV, 65.

[15] Ibid., I, 312.

[16] In his introduction to Schleiermacher's Dialektik, pp. xii-xiii.

Thus it is understandable that Plato was for Schleiermacher his "sole consolation" during the frustrating time in Stolp.[17] At one time it seemed as if he could get a professorship at Wuerzburg. The circumstances were, however, not too favorable. Nevertheless, Schleiermacher considered accepting the call. "I am not very happy about it, yet I shall go, for where would I not go if it may only give me something to do for my disrupted life, an attempt to find at least some new value for it."[18] In another letter, written on the same day, Schleiermacher gives expression to what is uppermost in his mind: "Wuerzburg cannot help my life much and whether the world shall receive more from me there is doubtful. The best that I can do is to translate Plato, and whether or not there is anything else for me to do in the world and for the world remains to be seen."[19] When everything had failed him, the reconstruction of the dialogues of Plato remained with him as a task that gave meaning to his life.

By this time Schleiermacher's association with Schlegel had been severed. Schlegel had had the great concept for the task but he had failed to undertake the burdensome work of careful critical inquiry. In midsummer of 1800, still in Berlin, Schleiermacher mentions in a letter that he is greatly worried

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[17] Schleiermacher, Briefe, III, 370.

[18] Unpublished; quoted in Dilthey, Leben Schleiermacher's, p. 702.

[19] Loc. cit.

by the thought of the immense philological difficulties bound up with the translation of Plato. "Friedrich does not even seem to think seriously about it."[20] Schlegel never did present anything more substantial than general ideas, however ingenious these may have been. He left Berlin, went South and finally settled in Paris. Then the correspondence concerning Plato broke up completely. What had promised to become a most fruitful association turned out to be one of Schleiermacher's greatest disappointments.

Quite in contrast to Schlegel, Schleiermacher was aware of the tremendous burden he took over when he started his work on Plato. "The years that may have to pass must be counted as nothing."[21] He considered this translation not as being just an interesting pursuit designed to culminate in merely another edition of a great philosopher's writings. Rather he was deeply, personally involved, and he considered his translation as a possible channel through which the spirit of Plato might influence the course of history. In his translation he wants "to give thanks to Plato" for what Plato has given him. "I could never forgive myself if I would produce something mediocre."[22] Even in 1799, when Schlegel had not yet given signs of lack of real interest

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[20] Schleiermacher, Briefe, III, 195.

[21] Ibid., I, 220.

[22] Ibid., IV, 72.

and when the first enthusiasm over the project had taken hold of Schleiermacher, he was aware of the almost superhuman task he had accepted. "I have a sacred shyness in me, and I fear that I have gone beyond the limits of my strength. May heaven help us."[23] Later on, when it was apparent that he could not finish his translation, he expressed his grief over the fact that he "cannot finish this work and many others" he intended to create.[24]

Thus it is understandable that it was a great shock for Schleiermacher when he had to leave Berlin. But, still, his work on Plato was foremost in his mind. In a letter to his sister, to whom Schleiermacher always confided his deepest anxieties and joys, he mentions nothing of his work except Plato. He is afraid that his transfer will seriously hamper the progress of the translation. "I need many old works which I could get easily from the libraries here but which I shall certainly not be able to obtain in Stolpe; even if I had the money I could still not buy them, since they are not always obtainable."[25] His apprehensions were justified; from Stolp he wrote in December, 1803: "It looks bad with regard to scholarly work, especially since I have been transferred into the desert where it is as good as impossible to enlarge the capital."[26] Nevertheless, Schleier-

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[23] Ibid., IV, 65.

[24] Ibid., II, 27.

[25] Ibid., I, 293; IV, 81.

[26] Ibid., IV, 89.

macher remained faithful to his work and after it had become definite that Schlegel had abandoned the project (1803), he decided to carry it out by himself.[27] He knew what he lost in Schlegel, but he also knew that he himself had greater persistence to work out the difficult detail that would ensure the quality of the whole translation.[28] In spite of all the adverse conditions under which Schleiermacher had to labor, the first volume of Plato was published as the result of the work of these first four years. The introduction to this volume contains the outline of Schleiermacher's theory of the unity of Plato's work and of its dialectic principle. The insights set forth in these few pages mark the beginning of much modern Plato research.

The material which is available for us at the moment does not allow for a definite dating of the first edition of Schleiermacher's Plato. The first two volumes were published in 1805, the three other volumes seem to have been published more nearly around 1810. It is probable that Schleiermacher had completed most of his work on the first two volumes while he was still in Stolp and that he prepared the other three volumes for print while he was back in Berlin, yet before he began his activity in the university and in the academy. Yet most of the work must have been finished in Stolp, for the introduction to the entire work (in the first volume) as well as the intro-

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[27] Ibid., I, 365.

[28] Ibid., IV, 89; III, 370.

duction to the first dialogue, namely to the Phaedrus, present the general plan of the interpretation in such detail that the basic work on the entire translation must have been finished even then.

Even the two first volumes seem to have impressed some of Schleiermacher's contemporaries as a work of greatest importance. Boekh's review expresses the judgment of a competent scholar: "Let us admit squarely what we think: no one up to this day has so fully understood Plato for himself and taught him to others as has this man. He embraces the highest as is done rarely and at the same time he does not treat the minute detail with less care: a talent which is developed by few scholars."[29]

We shall now turn to an analysis of Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato, and then we shall discuss the manner in which Platonic thought pervades Schleiermacher's own work. This will give content to the statements of Schleiermacher in which he speaks about Plato as a guide into the mystery of philosophy and of life.[30] The understanding of the relation between the two men is greatly aided if one understands Schleiermacher's terminology. When he speaks of his "sacred shyness" in the presence of Plato, of his gratitude to "Plato, the divine man," of the mysteries to which Plato has introduced him, of the inner urge

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[29]Boekh, Heidelberger Jahrbuecher der Literatur, I (1808), 83.

[30]See above, p. 33.

with which he is drawn to Plato, then he does not use embellished phraseology.[31] It rather highlights Schleiermacher's ultimately religious concern in his philosophy and science.[32] Wisdom as the goal of philosophy is religious in character. Thus Plato introduces Schleiermacher actually into an inner sanctuary. Plato is Schleiermacher's "mystagogue," similar to what Diotima is for Socrates in the Symposium.[33]

That Schleiermacher found in Plato a companion in his struggle for a philosophy and a science which are aware of their ultimately religious ground as over against a philosophy and science which are based merely upon the principles of autonomous reason, is expressed in Schleiermacher's own words when he de-

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[31]Schleiermacher never could write in an elegant style. In his own judgment he either had "too much" or "too little." These passages from his letters as well as, e.g., his Reden may have what he considered to be "too much." The interpreter of Schleiermacher has to take into account this fact. On the one hand he should account for Schleiermacher's "romantic" way of speaking and on the other hand he should not discount the passages which have "too much" as merely "romantic" sentimentality. See below, last chapter.

[32]"Science" here is the translation of the German Wissenschaft. The translation of that word is practically impossible. The only way out of the dilemma would be for one to paraphrase the concept; in paraphrasing it one could bring out the connotative values in each instance, but one would have to change the paraphrase from case to case. This, however, would create certain ambiguities, since it would be impossible to retain the identity of the denotation. Thus it seems best simply to translate Wissenschaft as "science," hoping that the meaning of the word will become clear from its place in the context.

[33]See below, last chapter.

scribes his relation to Plato as compared with his relation to Kant. In Plato, says Schleiermacher, he has found "the prophetic in man and that in man rises from his presentiments. How little did I understand Plato as a whole when I first read him in the universities; often I saw only a dark image of him. Yet, how did I, nevertheless, love and admire him even then. At that time I studied Kant with equal happiness and strength. Yet, from the very beginning I had the same feeling about his incompleteness and his aberrations, his misunderstanding of others and of himself which is with me now after I have acquired a mature understanding of him."[34]

Schleiermacher uncovered in Plato's work a well spring which draws from sources deeper than those which are at the root of the heritage of modern enlightenment.

B. Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato

(1) Schleiermacher's place in the history of Plato-interpretation. - "Roughly a hundred years have passed since Schleiermacher created his grand Plato-opus in German," writes Werner Jaeger in 1929;[35] "in review one may say: this work meant a complete renaissance of the greatest Greek philosopher; for the first time it permitted the entire German nation to partici-

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[34]Schleiermacher, Briefe, I, 312.

[35]Werner Jaeger, Platos Stellung in Aufbau der griechischen Bildung (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1928), p. 20.

pate in his spiritual wealth . . . . Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato has an equally classic importance for the modern sciences of the spirit (Geisteswissenschaften) as had the Alexandrine research in Homer for philology in its older sense."[36] As older philology developed its method in the tremendous struggle to penetrate the Homeric texts, so the modern concept of philological interpretation grew out of the concern with Plato, whose writings present the most complicated object for creative understanding known to the scholar of classical antiquity. The interpretation of Plato, says Jaeger, will always be the test for philology, since here philology can show how much it can achieve and since here also the limits of philological research will be brought to light.

Schleiermacher is the first man who recognized, posed and strove for a solution of the problem. "The reconstruction of the intrinsic order of the Platonic dialogues as Schleiermacher envisages it and which he presents through his division in several groups crowns his work on Plato; Schleiermacher's interpretation restores Plato for modern times to that place of importance which is his for all times: it elevates Plato above the limited contradictions between competing parties and it proclaims him as the eternal leader of the infinite task of philosophy."[37]

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[36] Ibid., p. 22.

[37] Loc. cit.

There is little reason why we should doubt this judgment of a modern scholar who has proved himself as one of the ablest interpreters of classical Greek thought. But we have all the more reason to raise the question as to just what it is that gives Schleiermacher such a key position in the history of Plato-interpretation.

We may consider briefly the background for Schleiermacher's work on Plato.[38] During the Renaissance Plato had been embraced with an enthusiasm that was a characteristic property of the age. Michelangelo's sonnets, the central position allocated to Rafael's school of Athens, the creation of the Platonic academy at Florence: all these are expressions of the devotion to Plato which then prevailed. The subsequent era of enlightenment, however, had no understanding for this cult, all the more

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[38]We can deal with this particular issue only in summary fashion. For greater detail see Werner Jaeger, op.cit., Boekh's review of Schleiermacher's Plato, op.cit., and the introduction with which Schleiermacher prefaced the whole of his Plato edition. Translations of Plato's works were, of course, available even before Schleiermacher. Yet, as far as the judgment of the scholars is concerned, they were not satisfactory. The most important and original part of Schleiermacher's Plato work is not the translation as such but the interpretation which he gives in the introductions. This interpretation, however, grows out of his hermeneutic concern for the text. Boekh's judgment on the matter may serve as indicative: "The former translations of Plato into our language and into other languages are, except for a few cases, marked by an ignorance of the manner in which Plato writes and of the character of classical Greek language. . . . Except for a few unsuccessful attempts they have not succeeded in understanding Plato as an artist, a view which unites the philosophical and the philological side of the task." (pp. 81-82).

since the Renaissance's understanding of Plato was likened to a mystical pantheism, leaning more toward Neoplatonism than toward Plato. In England, to be sure, there had been a revival of Platonism at Cambridge. Yet Schleiermacher was not acquainted with the important representatives of that movement. It seems that he knew only Shaftesbury, whom he studied rather early and for whom he had great admiration at that time,[39] but who did not represent fully the Cambridge Platonists, although he was indebted to that school of thought.

On the Continent the general trend of the enlightenment's interpretation of Plato was toward the production of a prose extract from the dialogues. The "philosophic content," that which Plato "really meant," was to be extracted from the "poetic embellishment" with which it was surrounded in the dialogues. For the mind of the Enlightenment the poetic form in which Plato had promulgated his philosophy was an unfortunate, pristine way of philosophizing. Under the impact of the Cartesian concept of knowledge truth was considered as confined to clear and distinct ideas which must form a system, resembling the clarity and logical necessity of mathematical structures. The Enlightenment's interpretation of Plato, therefore, culminated in that attempt to "free" the philosophic content of his writings from the poetic tendrils of the dialogue, and of arranging this content in the form of a rational structure. Regardless of the merit of some

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[39]Dilthey, op.cit., pp. 175-182.

of the research carried out under such principles - Schleiermacher himself is not blind for the light that had been shed on Plato by interpreters like Tennemann -, this approach has been completely discarded since it has become evident that it entails a basic misunderstanding of the nature of Plato's philosophy.

(2) Schleiermacher's personal precondition for the task. - It is natural that this misunderstanding could be recognized best by someone who himself was aware of the depth of reason which the enlightenment did not know. Schleiermacher possessed this qualification. He possessed a truly Socratic spirit. He knew that knowledge of truth is not merely a matter of logical conclusions which take their flight from the awareness of a self that stands sovereignly and autonomously in the world. Rather he was aware of the fact that the knowing self is infinitely bound up with the essential structures it seeks to know, that it is part of those structures and that knowledge of truth, therefore, is not merely a matter of gaining results which can be incorporated in a rational system as absolute certainties. For Schleiermacher the philosopher participates in his work constantly with his whole being, with the entire range of his life; his thinking is never separated from his acting nor his acting from his thinking. All of his thinking acts and of his acting thoughts are indivisibly part of the whole of life itself; the contradictions which arise as life is carried

on under the conditions of existence are ultimately overcome in the source of life. Thus, while the philosopher has to deal with the relativities of opposites, he yet aspires after the highest unity of all contradictions: God. This essential unity, however, cannot be found when truth is confined to a merely rational conceptual system, for mere rationality is itself confined to the realm of opposites. Therefore philosophy for Schleiermacher must include an idea of knowledge which at one and the same time encompasses the realm of opposites and of essential unity. Schleiermacher's own striving after a solution of this problem will be discussed below. At this time we need to note only that this tendency of thought makes it possible for Schleiermacher to apprehend the Platonic dialogue as dialogues, for it is in the structure of the dialogues that philosophy unfolds itself in the midst of life with all its opposites, never separating itself from life but penetrating to that which is the essential structure and ultimate unity of being within and beyond the flux of appearances.

(3) <u>The essence of Schleiermacher's understanding of Plato: Socratic dialectics as the idea of knowledge, the key to the philosophy of Plato</u>. - Certain repetitions in the subsequent discussion will be unavoidable. The nature of our subject forces us to move in concentric circles to some extent. Certain points have to be stated first more assertively in order to provide a basis for the discussion; they must be discussed again when the discussion has advanced enough to provide a frame

of reference in which they belong.

(a) In rather general terms one may say that Schleiermacher's rediscovery of the Platonic dialogue consists in his observation of the intricate relation that exists in Plato's work among physics, ethics and dialectics. The importance of Schleiermacher's interpretation lies in the discovery of the relation among these elements. According to his view ethics culminates in the Republic, physics in the Timaeus. Ethics deals with the substance of history; physics deals with the essence of nature. Neither of these disciplines[40] is truly understood if it is not seen in relation to the other; but this relation can not be discovered where both are not seen in their relation to a third element of Plato's philosophy, namely the science of dialectics.

Dialectics is at the basis of everything in Plato. It forms the subject of the first dialogue - i.e., what Schleiermacher considered to be the first one -, namely the Phaedrus. Dialectics is the indispensable primary science on which all other sciences must be built. The true philosopher, i.e., one in whom the eros of the Symposium is alive, is also a true master

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[40] Schleiermacher calls ethics and physics Wissenschaften or even positive Wissenschaften. We shall have to translate these as "science" or as "positive sciences." "Positive" is used here in distinction from "dialectic." Dialectics is the science which is concerned with knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself; the positive sciences are concerned with knowledge for the sake of knowledge of nature and of man. "Scientific" means as much as "not arbitrary"; in Schleiermacher's terms this means that inquiry is scientific when it derives its basic principles from dialectics.

of dialectics. Therefore the first of Plato's dialogues treats of dialectics explicitly; and while other dialogues contain explicit treatments too, they do so only in a larger context, their scope being something else. Nevertheless, they are not less dialectic, for what is put forth explicitly in the Phaedrus is the implicit principle of all dialogues. Dialectics is that mode of seeking knowledge which contains in itself the idea of knowledge. Dialectics, therefore, deals with knowledge as it is in itself, quite apart from any particular content. The other sciences which have a particular content, such as nature or history, must be developed in truly dialectic manner if they want to find true knowledge of whatever they are concerned with. Therefore, it is quite natural that also in those dialogues where the idea of knowledge itself is not the immediate concern, dialectic passages nevertheless appear, for this is necessary if one wants to make sure that the intrinsic principle of the particular inquiry remains within the path of seeking truth.

The general plan of Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato grows out of his inquiry into the gradual unfolding of Plato's construction of these three "sciences." Further below we shall discuss this plan in greater detail. After what has been said, however, we can well appreciate that Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato hinges on his understanding of Plato's dialectics. It may therefore be justified if one considers his understanding of the relation of Socrates to Plato as the essence of his understanding of Plato's philosophy.

(b) In his academy-lecture on "The Value of Socrates as a Philosopher," delivered in 1815, Schleiermacher seeks to "vindicate" Socrates' place in the history of philosophy.[41] Apart from the question concerning the historical accuracy of Schleiermacher's portrait of Socrates, this lecture gives an excellent insight into the keen appreciation which Schleiermacher had for the structure of the Platonic dialogue and for the nature of Plato's philosophy.

Schleiermacher sets out by posing the question what the merit of Socrates may have been for the history of philosophy. There are three points of reference, says Schleiermacher. On the one hand one has Xenophon's writings; on the other hand one has Plato's dialogues and finally one has a definite change in philosophic method if one compares philosophy before and after Socrates. Had there been some particularly spectacular innovation with regard to the established sciences in Socrates' teaching, then Xenophon would have made mention of it. But Xenophon portrays Socrates merely as an honest, upright citizen. Yet there must have been something in the teaching of Socrates "that gave an impulse to and justification for Plato's introducing him in the dialogues in that manner in which Plato does introduce him.[42] Considering the change in philosophic method

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[41] Schleiermacher, "Ueber den Wert des Sokrates als Philosophen" (Akademieabhandlung vom 27. Juli, 1815), Werke, Part III, II, 287-308.

[42] Ibid., 298.

which took place after Socrates, one discovers that this change consists in the introduction of the idea of knowledge itself, namely in the introduction of (Socratic) dialectics. This then must have been Socrates' merit. "This awakening of the idea of knowledge and its first presentation must have been the philosophic content of Socrates' teaching."[43]

Socrates knew that he did not know and this implies that he knew that there is knowledge. Ye , since true ideas cannot contradict each other, most of the current views must - because of their contradictory character - be based on mere opinion. "In as far as Socrates strove to uncover the contradictions within the current stream of opinions held by people, in so far did he seek to stimulate his basic insight within those who were able to understand him or who could in some way reach him through their presentiments."[44] Socrates' remarks, directed against the positive sciences, for example against physics, do not imply that he rejects the possibility of having such sciences. It rather shows how "he devoted his entire life to the widest possible and lively effect of his principal insight; it was his wish that the basis for knowledge may be established quite safely before one goes into wider realms [e.g., physics]." It is characteristic that Plato's own work begins with a development of

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[43] Ibid., 300.

[44] Ibid., 301.

this basis.[45]

It is in the nature of dialectics that it cannot be taught dryly; "rather this art must be exercised and viewed in manifold examples."[46] Dialectics go on in the midst of life if it is to be true dialectics in the Socratic sense. Schleiermacher lays great stress on this fact. It is one of the major reasons why Plato's dialogues must be seen as a whole, for only then is it evident how dialectics are interrelated with the other fields of methodical inquiry. Plato always exercises his art on concrete examples. His first dialogues, being concerned more with the nature of virtues, draw probably from those realms which were also in the reach of Socrates himself. Yet even when Plato goes further, when he evolves ethics and physics more and more as "scientific" disciplines, i.e., when he enters areas which Socrates himself was probably not ready to invade, he still does so in truly Socratic manner in so far as dialectics remain an intrinsic part of his inquiries.

It is very difficult to draw an absolute line at the point where in Plato's dialogues the actual contribution of Socrates ends and that of Plato begins, "for as in everything Platonic the Socratic spirit is present, so in everything Socratic Plato is interwoven."[47] Yet this difficulty of drawing an ac-

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[45] Ibid., 306.

[46] Ibid., 304.

[47] Ibid., 307.

curate historic picture of Socrates constitutes no problem for an understanding of Plato's work. Rather this understanding hinges not on the separation of Socrates from Plato but on one's ability to understand the nature of Socrates' dialectics and to see how it is present in all of Plato's writings, even in those writings which are surely far beyond that which Socrates could encompass himself. To see the Socratic spirit in all of Plato's work is the very key to an understanding of Plato's philosophy,

> for everywhere the spirit and method of Socrates rules. For Plato, to work in Socratic fashion is the highest goal; it is never simply something subordinate. Thus Plato had no misgivings when he used the appellation "Socrates" to express what he thought were only consequences from the basic ideas of Socrates. . . . In general one must say that Plato immortalized Socrates in the most beautiful way in which a pupil can glorify his teacher, for Plato participated personally in the development of those same philosophic concerns which in one sense originated with Socrates. Plato does this also with greater justice than it could ever be done by means of a literal report.[48]

We can surmise from all of this that Schleiermacher's understanding of Plato has its center in his understanding of the nature and role of Socratic dialectics within Plato's work. So far in our analysis we have stressed the role of dialectics in Plato. As we proceed in our discussion we shall need to pay more attention to the nature of dialectics. We shall do so by by treating of it within the framework of our analysis of the structure of Schleiermacher's interpretation.

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[48] Ibid., 308.

(4) The structure of Schleiermacher's Plato-interpretation. - (a) Schleiermacher believed that the inner movement of Plato's thought, i.e., the unfolding of Socratic dialectics, can be fully appreciated only if one gains an understanding of the interrelation which exists between the individual parts of each dialogue as well as between one dialogue and the other. Each dialogue anticipates the next one and at the same time presupposes the earlier ones. The Socratic spirit has within itself a certain necessity for the progression of thought; it anticipates the whole but it has to ascend step by step. The final results, e.g., the vision of the good, cannot be understood if they are simply asserted without one's having gone through the previous dialectical inquiries. By the same token, the first initial steps cannot be fully understood when the ultimate goal is not anticipated. Thus Schleiermacher comes to the conclusion that the interpretation of Plato must culminate in a rediscovery of the intrinsic order of the dialogues; one must strive to understand the gradual unfolding of Plato's philosophy in terms of an ever growing awareness and explication of the implications which are intrinsic to the Socratic idea of knowledge.

It is quite obvious that this view of the task puts Schleiermacher in direct opposition to those interpretations which seek an abstract systematization of the "philosophic content" of Plato's writings. Such attempts, says Schleiermacher, may be helpful in so far as they show that there is more in

Plato than is assumed by some interpreters who hold that he had no philosophic concern whatsoever but was merely interested in a witty dialectical play, leading to nothing but scepticism. Yet these systematizations can never serve as an introduction to an understanding of Plato; they even preclude a proper understanding of his philosophy.

> So. . .will those spectators of the analysis fail altogether to attain to a knowledge of the Philosophy of Plato, for in that, if in any thing, form and subject are inseparable, and no proposition is to be rightly understood, except in its own place, and with the combinations and limitations which Plato has assigned to it.[49]

In other words, even if there were such a thing as an abstractable "content," it could never be restated properly because it would lack the infinitely minute qualifications which it can have only in the tissue of the entire context.

Yet there is something much more dangerous in these systematizations which pretend to present what Plato "really meant"; for, by separating form and content, they completely overlook and so eliminate the Socratic spirit from Plato's work. People who make this kind of interpretation will never

> comprehend the Philosopher himself; and least of all, will his purpose have succeeded in their case, tending as it did not only to exhibit vividly his own thought to others, but by that very means vividly to excite and awaken theirs.[50]

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[49] Schleiermacher, Platons Werke (6 vols., 2d ed.; Berlin, 1817-28), I, 16. This and succeeding quotations are taken from his Introductions to the Dialogues of Plato, trans. William Dobson (Cambridge Eng. : J. & J. J. Deighton, 1836), p. 14. Deviations from the translator's text will be indicated in the footnotes.

[50] Loc. cit.

The form of the dialogue is just as much part of its content as that which the dialogue wants to communicate, namely the Socratic spirit. Therefore Plato chose a form, or rather was driven to choose a form of writing which either precludes understanding or which permits only an understanding that has truly recreated and appropriated Plato's thoughts as one's own act of searching for truth in the Socratic manner. Since this - one may say - indirect communication of the idea of knowledge can be achieved only - or at least Plato chose this as his only way - in the form of the dialogue, no interpretation can really lead to Plato which does away with the form as something separable from the content. The form is part of the content.

It seems to Schleiermacher that the dialogues as a whole exhibit a structure similar to the individual dialogue. Each dialogue consists of parts and of partners which receive their full meaning from the dialectic interrelation to one another. To grasp the inner reasons for these interrelations is to grasp the life of the Socratic spirit. The concern for the understanding of the inner life of Plato's philosophy is behind Schleiermacher's search for the "natural order of the dialogues." When Schleiermacher says that Plato can be fully understood only if one has found the true order among the dialogues, then he does not mean to say that everyone who knows the historically accurate sequence of the dialogues knows also the spirit of Plato's philosophy; he rather wants to point out that the dialogues form an

organic whole, similar to a drama in which progression of action is necessary, which must have a certain sequence of acts, and which yet must be understood as a unit transcending the temporal sequence in which the plot evolves. The unit cannot be understood if one does not know the sequence of the individual acts but the sequence of the acts is equally meaningless where one is not aware of the unit. If one really wants to understand the spirit of a drama, then one must understand the inner necessity under which the plot unfolds if it is to form the unit of the whole. This is the concern in Schleiermacher's search for the "natural order of the dialogues." To demonstrate this order is to invite the reader to reenact for himself "the ever growing unfolding of Plato's ideas," an unfolding which takes place under a necessity intrinsic to the Socratic idea of knowledge, and which is pursued in the spirit of Socrates. The result will be that Plato "may himself be at last understood as a philosopher and as a perfect artist."[51]

Schleiermacher's insistence on the necessity of understanding Plato as an artist is but another way of stating his essential understanding of Plato. As poet - the dialogues are works of poetry - Plato has succeeded in finding that form which is best suited to the communication of the Socratic spirit. It is within the nature of poetry to communicate "indirectly." A

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[51] Ibid., I, 17 (14).

prose statement is direct, it can be taken over by someone without his actual participation in the truth which is communicated. This is never possible with poetry. Something stated poetically can be understood only when the hearer actively reënacts and appropriates that which the poetic statement expresses. Furthermore, Plato did not choose to express something in poetic form which could have been expressed in any other way. What he had to communicate could not be expressed differently. When Schleiermacher insists on the necessity of understanding Plato as philosopher and as poet, it means the same thing as saying that one must grasp the Socratic spirit in the dialogues.

From all this it is evident that Schleiermacher's search for the genuine order of the dialogues is not so much a "historical" concern as it is rather a "natural" concern. As we shall see later, Schleiermacher's arrangement of the dialogues is far from what more accurate historical research has meanwhile advanced as being the historic sequence in which Plato wrote his dialogues. His interpretation, however, is nevertheless an example of genuine understanding of Plato, for what he believed to be the order of the dialogues is to a large extent not their historical order but rather their "natural" interdependence. This may not be surprising, since Schleiermacher's principle for the reconstruction of the order - namely the unfolding of Socratic dialectics - is indeed a genuinely Platonic principle, rather central in Plato's philosophy.

(b) What are the criteria by which Schleiermacher judges a dialogue to be genuine as well as where it is to be located in the series of the dialogues? Both these questions, says Schleiermacher, can be answered only through an analysis of the inner nature of the dialogue itself and thus the answer to both questions has to be found in an effort to answer them jointly.[52] Older traditions pertaining to either the genuineness or the order of the dialogues must be based equally on an evaluation of inner reasons and they, therefore, are equally subject to the criteria found only through an analysis of the texts.[53]

Apart from certain historical references in the texts, which may be of some aid in establishing the chronology, Schleiermacher notes three points of reference that can be considered as internal witness. These criteria are, first, the particular Platonic use of language; second, a certain common content which is present in all the dialogues; and third, the particular form which Plato has given to these dialogues.[54] The first two criteria are not too helpful if they are used in isolation, for Plato was surely able author who used language with great versatility. Furthermore, some of his dialogues may have had more the character of occasional studies or of works written for

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[52] Ibid., I, 50.

[53] Ibid., I, 31-32.

[54] Ibid., I, 36.

a particular occasion and may thus, in style as well as in content, have fallen out of what may be established as the usual order by judging from his major works. These difficulties which one encounters, where only the first two criteria are applied,

> clearly tend to show, that we should judge neither from the subject alone, nor from the language alone, but that we must look to a third and more certain something in which those two unite - the Form and Composition in general. For even in the language, what affords most proof consists not in particulars but in the whole tenor and peculiar colouring of it, which at once stands in the closest relation to the composition. In like manner this will betray itself in its principal features even in those studies in which we miss the important matter of these works of a higher class. Moreover, and it is this which must contribute to give us a correct idea of this genuine Platonic form, we need not first abstract it, like those other two tests, out of the larger works as an analogy, the limits of the applicability of which can still not be drawn with certainty; but it is, in every essential point, a natural consequence of Plato's notions with regard to philosophical communication, and must therefore be found, generally, to the same extent in which this latter exists. For it is nothing but the immediate putting into practice of those methodical ideas which we developed from Plato's first principle as to the mode in which writing operates. So that the same idiosyncracy of the philosopher which justifies us in looking for a pervading connection throughout his works, does also reveal to us that which yields the surest canon for judging of their genuineness, and thus the solution of both problems grows from a common root.[55]

Schleiermacher's reference to "those methodical ideas which we developed from Plato's first principle as to the mode in which writing operates" gives us the clue to how we can understand also his philological criterion as an immediate outcome of his essential understanding of the Socratic nature of Plato's

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[55] Ibid., I, 39-40 (35-36). Italics mine.

philosophy, just as this understanding has been seen as forming the reason and task - Schleiermacher now adds "justification" - for "striving after the discovery of the continuous order of Plato's works."

This does not mean, as we shall see later, that Schleiermacher believed that Plato had the whole of his work in mind before he began to write. Schleiermacher is rather guided by the assumption that the very core of Plato's approach is related to the whole of his work like a seedling is related to the full grown plant. "The thoughts concerning the nature of philosophic communication" are themselves not something which stands outside of Plato's philosophy. Form and content of this philosophy is the immediate outcome of these thoughts, and they themselves are not more nor less than a formulation of the nature of Socratic spirit, of that spirit which is at the bottom of Socratic dialectics. Paraphrasing a passage from the Phaedrus, Schleiermacher points out that Plato

> treating the subject in a somewhat trifling manner [geringfuegig],. . . . complains of the uncertainty which always attaches to written communication of thoughts, as to whether the mind also of the reader has spontaneously conformed to such communication, and in reality appropriated it to itself, or whether, with the mere ocular apprehension of the words and letters a vain conceit is excited in the mind that it understands what it does not understand. Hence, that it is folly to build too much upon this, and that true reliance can be placed only upon oral and living instruction. But, he continues to argue, writing must be hazarded at a venture, and more for what it is as regards the writer and those who already share in his knowledge, than for what it can do for those who as yet know nothing.[56]

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[56] Ibid., I, 17-18 (15).

If Plato, nevertheless, has written so much during his life time, "then," says Schleiermacher, "it is clear that he must have endeavoured to make written instruction as like as possible to that better kind, and he must also have succeeded in that attempt."[57] That "better kind of instruction" is, of course, oral teaching, in which, as Plato says, the father of language can always protect his child not only against attacks from others but especially against the slowness of understanding which is a property of those who are not yet in the true stage of seeking knowledge. Thus it is evident, says Schleiermacher, that Plato <u>had</u> to write in the form of his dialogues because his ideas concerning the communication of philosophical thoughts, i.e. the Socratic idea of truth, force him to communicate in this form that alone can preclude any understanding, except that understanding which is itself within the realm of Socratic spirit.

> In every way, not accidentally only, or from practice and tradition, but necessarily and naturally Plato's was a Socratic method, and indeed, as regards the uninterrupted and progressive reciprocation, and the deeper impression made upon the mind of the hearer, to be certainly as much preferred to that of his master, as the pupil excelled him as well in constructive Dialectics, as in richness and compass of subjective intuition.[58]

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[57] <u>Ibid.</u>, I, 19 (16).

[58] <u>Ibid.</u>, I, 18-19 (16). "Pupil" instead of "scholar" (<u>Schueler</u>).

When Schleiermacher elevates the form of the dialogues of Plato to the decisive philological criterion by which the dialogues are to be judged, he chooses that element in Plato's writings which most clearly and unmistakeably represents the Socratic spirit, since the form of the dialogues is the manner in which that spirit becomes actual. So it is evident that the criteria Schleiermacher employs in his interpretation are immediately rooted in his essential understanding of Plato's philosophy. It has been discussed above how the task for this interpretation is equally an immediate outcome of that essential understanding. We now turn to a discussion of that order in which Schleiermacher has arranged the dialogues.

(c) A report on Schleiermacher's arrangement of the dialogues is rather difficult, since everything Schleiermacher has to say in his introductions to the dialogues is so closely interrelated with everything else that one is forced almost to reproduce word for word what Schleiermacher has put forth himself if one wants to give an inclusive picture of his reconstruction of the order of the dialogues. A mere recounting of that order is not in itself very helpful, since the force of Schleiermacher's interpretation does not depend so much on the results - results which have been drastically corrected since -, but rather on the principles that have led to these results - principles which today still form a large part of the methodology employed by

scholars of classical antiquity. Since, however, neither the principles nor the results can be discussed meaningfully without each other, we have to find a way of dealing with this question which provides the insights necessary for this study and which yet does not lead beyond its scope. For this purpose it may be best if we first discuss the nature of the three groups into which Schleiermacher subdivides the Platonic dialogues and then discuss the principles which led him to adopt this order.

Schleiermacher holds that there are three principal classes of dialogues. The first class contains the major works in which the essential part of Plato's philosophy is developed. The second class contains works of lesser importance, works which lead up to or give "foot-notes" to the major dialogues. The third class, finally, contains such dialogues which are of no philosophical significance to speak of, since they are probably works written for a special occasion rather than for philosophical instruction. It is necessary, says Schleiermacher, to find the order of the works in the first class first, after which the dialogues of the second class find their place wherever they fit most meaningfully. Dialogues of the third class may then be presented in an appendix. The appendix must also contain such dialogues of which the Platonic authorship can neither be definitely asserted nor denied. This distinction in classes separates the dialogues into three horizontal levels,

so to speak.

Yet one can also draw vertical lines of distinction, lines which separate the dialogues according to the phases through which the development of Plato's thought has passed. Here one can discover three major groups. One group contains those works which are of objective scientific character. Schleiermacher calls this group "constructive." Then there is another group which is furthest away from the constructive group. According to its character Schleiermacher calls it the "elementary" group. Between these two is yet another group which is of transitional character, leading from the elementary works to the mature and constructive ones.

The constructive group includes the Republic, the Timaeus and the Critias. Since these three dialogues are mainly constructive in character, i.e., since they present in epideictic fashion a view of man and nature - which is to say, they contain ethics and physics as developed positive sciences - they can be understood only as the result of the earlier dialogues which evolve these sciences during the course of manifold inquiries and exercises. More than anything else,

> the nature of the thing decides the question; inasmuch as these expositions rest upon the investigations previously pursued, with which all the dialogues are more or less engaged; upon the nature of knowledge generally, and of philosophical knowledge in particular; and upon the applicability of the idea of science to the objects treated of in those works, Man himself, and Nature.[59]

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[59] Ibid., I, 45 (41).

There is no dialogue, says Schleiermacher, except maybe the Laws, which could meaningfully stand between the Republic, the Timaeus and the Critias. These three form an inseparable unit. If one assumes that some other dialogue should be later than the Republic, then one must also assume that it is later than the two others. This would imply, however, "that Plato first published the mature presentations and that he afterward produced the inquiries into their elementary principles."[60] This, however, is highly improbable since even

> the Republic, as being clearly the earliest of the properly expositive works, at once supposes the existence of all dialogues not belonging to this group, and this splendid structure contains, as it were, let into its foundation, the key-stones of all these noble arches upon which it rests, and which, previous to entering that edifice whose support they are, if one considers them only in reference to themselves, and surveys them immediately within their own range, one might, not being able to divine their destination, pronounce objectless and imperfect.[61]

This last group, then, presupposes the two other groups, the first of which is formed by the elementary dialogues. The major class in this first group contains the Phaedrus, the Protagoras and the Parmenides. They are marked by a peculiarly youthful character "which may indeed be most easily recognized in the first two, but even in the last will not escape the attentive eye."[62] These three dialogues are related to each other,

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[60] Ibid., I, 47.

[61] Ibid., I, 46-47 (42). "Group" instead of "class."

[62] Ibid., I, 48-49 (44).

if not by the same artistic purpose which unites the three in the last group, then nevertheless

> in the closest manner by a similarity in the entire construction scarcely ever to be met with again to the same degree, by many like thoughts, and a number of particular allusions. But the most important thing yet in them is their internal matter, for in them are developed the first breathings of what is the basis of all that follows, of dialectics as the instrument of Philosophy, of Ideas as its proper object, consequently of the possibility and the conditions of knowledge.[63]

This first group contains also many of the dialogues of minor class. When all of them are properly arranged, one finds them to form this series: Phaedrus, Lysis, Protagoras, Laches, Charmenides, Euthyphro, Parmenides. The appendix contains: Apology, Crito, Ion, Hippias Minor, Hipparchus, Minus and Alcibiades II.

The second group, i.e., the group which forms the transition from the elementary to the constructive dialogues, includes Gorgias, Theaetetus, Meno, Euthydemus, Cratylus, Sophist, Statesman, Symposium, Phaedo, Philebus. In the appendix Schleiermacher lists Theages, Erastae, Alcibiades I, Menexenus, Hippias, Clitophon.

These dialogues fill the gap between the first group and the second group "inasmuch as they treat progressively of the applicability of those principles, of the distinction between philosophical and common knowledge in their united application to

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[63] Ibid., I, 49 (44). "Dialectics" instead of "Logic" (Dialektik).

two proposed and real sciences, that of Ethics, namely, and of Physics."[64] They strive after a unification of the practical and the theoretical, a unification which is reached in the last group and which is completely lacking in the first.

These groups, then, says Schleiermacher, are the three parts in which the works of Plato should be presented.

> In the first part, the development of the dialectic method is the predominant object, and hence, manifestly, the Phaedrus is the first and the Parmenides the last, partly as a most perfect exposition of it, partly as a transition to the second part, because it begins to philosophize upon the relation of ideas to actual things. In the second part, the explanation of knowledge and of the process of knowing in operation is the predominant subject, and at the head of that part stands the Theaetetus, beyond the possibility of a mistake, taking up as it does this question by its first root, the Sophistes with the annexed Politicus in the middle, while the Phaedo and Philebus close it as transitions to the third part; the first, from the anticipatory sketch of Physics, the second, because in its discussion of the idea of the Good, it begins to approximate to a totally constructive exposition, and passes into the direct method.[65]

We now turn to a discussion of the whole of Schleiermacher's Plato-interpretation. Behind Schleiermacher's plan for the order of the dialogues stands the conviction that Plato's philosophy unfolded itself as an ever growing process with a pedagogic purpose. This, however, does not mean that Schleiermacher suggests a view according to which Plato had his

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[64] Ibid., I, 49 (45).

[65] Ibid., I, 50-51 (46). "Dialectic" instead of "dialegistic" (dialektisch). "Physics" instead of "Natural philosophy" (Physik).

philosophy ready made in mind when he began writing and teaching, as if the dialogues were something like the chapters of a book which form the most expedient explication of what the writer has worked out as a whole.[66] Schleiermacher rather wants to suggest that Plato anticipated intuitively the entire structure of his philosophy but that only through the process of teaching and writing could this structure be actualized. This view allows for both the constant progress of the unfolding of Plato's ideas[67] as well as for manifold subsidiary inquiries which are interwoven into the general development. When Schleiermacher justifies allocating to the Phaedrus the first place among the dialogues, he rejects the objection that the Phaedrus is much too mature to stand at the beginning by pointing out that

> every skillful and self-experienced person will certainly allow that true philosophizing does not commence with any particular point, but with a breathing of the whole, and that the personal character of the writer, as well as the peculiarities of his modes of thought and world view, must be to be found in the first commencement of the really free and independent expression of his sentiments (freie und selbsttaetige Aeusserung). . . . The existence in the Phaedrus of the germs of nearly the whole of his system, is hardly to be denied; but then their undeveloped state is quite as clear.[68]

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[66] Ibid., I, 24.

[67] Ibid., I, 17.

[68] Ibid., I, 75-76 (67-68). "World view" instead of "view of things in general" (Weltansicht).

In this connection it is interesting to note Schleiermacher's understanding of the role of myth in Plato's writings. Whenever Plato has to introduce elements which he knows only in his "prophetic presentiment" but which he had not yet had occasion to develop philosophically, then he introduces such elements in mythical form.[69] Thus, for example, the myth of the soul's ascent to the outer realms of heaven is an anticipation of the doctrine of anamnesis which is dialectically developed in the Meno.

> Here too, no one on comparison of two passages will find it possible to entertain any view except that the Menon refers retrospectively to the Phaedrus. Otherwise we shall be obliged to conclude that he is resolved to recognise no relation whatever between the mythical and philosophical method of exposition, and intentionally to overlook what is struggling to show itself spontaneously.[70]

Just as myth is understood as integral and necessary part of the dialogues, so everything else is seen as absolutely necessary if only one is aware of the manifold interrelations of all the elements, an interrelation which is just as essential as the elements themselves, for nothing can be understood in Plato's philosophy if viewed in isolation.

> This is just Plato's method, and it is the triumph of his master-mind that in his great and rich-wrought forms nothing is without its use, and that he leaves nothing for chance or blind caprice to determine, but with him every thing is proportionate and co-operative

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[69] Ibid., III, 327.

[70] Ibid., III, 335 (214). See above, p. 40, about Schleiermacher's remark concerning the prophetic element in Plato.

according to his subjects' range.[71]

It was discussed above how the form of the dialogue must serve as criterion for its interpretation.[72] For Schleiermacher this is indispensable, because this art of writing expresses itself not only in its assertive statements but just as much in that which is not explicitly stated and which is discernible only where the divination of the reader sees the implications of that which is implicit in the composition of the whole.

The very basis of this art, says Schleiermacher, in its immediate origination from the life and work of Socrates, is the subject of the Phaedrus. We may well choose Schleiermacher's discussion of the Phaedrus as an object of more detailed analysis, since this dialogue takes an all important position in Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato and since his introduction to it may serve as an excellent example by which Schleiermacher's method of interpretation can be illustrated.

Schleiermacher begins by pointing out that the Phaedrus usually is prefaced by a subtitle such as "Or About the Beautiful," "About Love," or "Of the Soul." Such subtitles, however, have the unhealthy result of guiding the reader's attention on

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[71] Ibid., I, 64 (56).

[72] See above, especially pp. 57-61.

the wrong track. They favor a quite mistaken opinion about the philosophic meaning of this work. The habit of adding subtitles to Plato's dialogues has been most detrimental for the proper understanding especially of the Phaedrus. Anyone can see that only one part of the dialogue discusses love and beauty and the unprejudiced reader will, therefore, not assume that either one can be the true subject of the dialogue.[73]

There are two major parts about equal in extent. The first is formed by three speeches about love - one by Lysias, two by Socrates; the second part contains a discussion of the conditions under which rhetorics were presented at the time, and a highly technical discussion about the possible basis for rhetoric does not return to the subject of the first part. If one now assumes that the dialogue is either concerned with rhetoric or with love and beauty as its main subject, then one must admit that the carefully worked out dialogue suffers from an irreconcilable inner tension, quite in contrast to Plato's own advice, according to which a dialogue should be formed like a living being that has a body with proportioned members, suiting the nature of the spirit. If love were the actual subject of the dialogue, then the second part would be a highly uncalled-for addition.[74]

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[73] Ibid., I, 55.

[74] Ibid., I, 56.

The first two speeches discuss love in terms of the pleasure and the gain which is given in the relation between the lovers. The last speech opposes this approach since it discusses love in ethical and in mythical terms. Nothing would be more in order than that the dialogue should now turn into an argument about the nature and the higher essence of love (as in the Symposium). Instead it turns to rhetoric. It does not help if one elevates the third speech with its widely celebrated myth to the place of real importance, for - regardless of the depth of insight into the nature of love and beauty imbedded in this myth - all the rest would then appear to be a curious aberration, pieced together without rhyme or reason.[75]

> Now if, on the contrary, we compare the second part instead of troubling ourselves so uselessly about the first, the result seems to be that as the Art is treated of in the second part, we are to look at the speeches in the first, more with reference to the mode of treatment, and their value as works of art, than to the subject discussed; whence ensues an attempt, the reverse of the first, to centre the main object of the whole in that which forms the subject of the second part, the more correct notions, namely, brought forward respecting the true nature of the art of speaking.[76]

This means that one must analyse the speeches as to their paradigmatic value in relation to the theory of rhetoric which is discussed in the second part. Plato first gives

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[75] Ibid., I, 57.

[76] Ibid., I, 58 (50-51).

three points for the theory of rhetoric.

The rhetor professes to deceive people artistically. Now, says Plato, if one considers the art of rhetorics as practiced now, then one must say that most of it consists of merely technical tricks. If one wants to deceive people methodically then one must base the art of rhetoric on dialectics, that is, upon a scientific method which subsumes related concepts under higher ones. Only in so far as rhetoric is based upon such a dialectics can it claim to be an art.[77]

The second point that Plato makes consists in a widening of the concept of rhetoric. The art of speaking, he says, must be the same everywhere, in philosophic discourse and in private discourse, written or spoken, yes even in every-day conversation. This widening of the concept of rhetoric into an art that includes all logical communication forces rhetoric to search for its basis in greater depths than was necessary as long as it only included the art of deception. This second step furthermore reveals the striving artist in Plato, who,

> while a great archetype [Urbild], emblematical of the species which he practically created, floats before him in his mind, . . . subjects himself to strict conditions, which according to the general view he might have avoided.[78]

The second step leads to the third one, namely to Plato's conception of art.

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[77] Ibid., I, 59.

[78] Ibid., I, 60 (52-53). "Practically" instead of "almost" (fast neu).

> But as by this very extension, rhetoric, in the sense in which the word was hitherto used, is in a manner destroyed, Plato clears himself, prophetically, as it were, of the accusation of diluting it away and letting it vanish into the indefinite. . . And this he does best by that declaration of his views according to which he sets up rhetoric, notwithstanding its maintained dependency upon dialectics, and even by virtue of it, to be art in a higher sense.[79]

At this time Schleiermacher formulates most clearly what he understands to be art in the Platonic sense.

> For true art, according to him, is nothing but that practice of which again a true science, or, as our own countrymen usually call it, a theory can be made: for it is thus that Plato distinguishes art and artless dispatch. Now such a science can arise only when the classified variety, dialectically exhibited as resulting from the central notion of the art, is connected in a systematic and perfectly exhaustive manner with what results from the whole range of the means and objects. Accordingly, he demands from the art of speaking, that it enumerate all the different kinds of speeches, and fix every one and each to correspond to all the different kinds of minds, in order thus to define how every speech, under given circumstances, can and must be fashioned according to the rules of art.[80]

This analysis of the second part of the dialogue, says Schleiermacher, gives clues to the understanding of the first part; the speeches there are examples of such different kinds of speeches. Yet this solution still is not satisfactory, for why should Plato have chosen love and beauty as content for these speeches? If the second part were only concerned with

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[79] Loc. cit.

[80] Ibid., I, 61 (53).

the art of rhetoric, then the content of the speeches would be accidental, yet nothing in Plato is accidental.

A close analysis shows that the second part not only transcends love and beauty but also its form and even rhetoric itself. Everything which had been said about rhetoric is suddenly applied to poetry and statesmanship, since they too are arts.

> It can escape no one that, properly speaking, even rhetoric itself is set up and treated of only as an example, and the same even is said of it almost as of the speeches delivered, that, setting aside the higher laws which must be exhibited therein, its whole operation and business is nothing but child's-play.[81]

If we keep following the movement of the dialogue in this way, says Schleiermacher, then we are constantly driven from the external to its internal. The internal turns again to be something external and so on until we finally arrive at the dialogue's innermost soul

> which is no other than the inward spirit of those higher laws, the art, namely, of unshackled thought, and informing communication, or, dialectics. For which all else in this dialogue is but preparation, in order to bring about the discovery of it in the Socratic method by the exhibition of its spirit in a well known particular, and that one in which an exclusively scientific form was in part generally recognized, and in part easy to exhibit. Now not only does Plato intend to celebrate this art as the root of every other ramification to which that name can apply, but, while in all other arts we are indeed to recognise it, it is itself to appear to every one as something much higher and perfectly,

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[81] Ibid., I, 65 (57).

> divine, which is to be learned and practised, by no means for their sake, but for its own and for that of a divine existence. Now the original object of dialectics is found in ideas, which he therefore here describes with all the ardour of first love, and thus it is philosophy that Plato here extols, independently and wholly, as the highest of all objects, and as the foundation of every thing estimable and beautiful, and for whom he may triumphantly demand that her claims to these titles be universally recognised.[82]

Dialectics as the very center of philosophy is the very soul of the dialogue. Once this center has been discovered, one understands why Plato had to introduce his speeches on love. For

> it is just because philosophy fully appears here not only as an inward state, but, in accordance with its nature, as extending and communicating itself, that it is necessary to bring to consciousness and to exhibit the <u>impulse</u> which forces it outwards from within, and which is nothing but that genuine and divine love which raises itself above every other, originating in and proceeding upon any notion of advantage, as philosophy does by its nature excel their subordinate arts which are content to play either with pleasure or profit. For however much the attainment of the object of that impulse must be the effect of art and of the judgment that arranges its details, still the impulse itself appears as something originally existing and ever at work in the mind of the finished and perfect man, seeking its object from without, consequently as passion and divine inspiration.[83]

Herewith all the tasks which sprang from a recognition of the difference between the elements of the dialogue have been solved. Dialectics, rooted in divine love, is the "real unity

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[82] <u>Ibid.</u>, I, 66 (58).

[83] <u>Ibid.</u>, I, 66-67 (58-59).

of the work - bringing out everything, vivifying and connecting all."[84]

The vision of dialectics as the center of philosophy and of life has come to Plato under the immediate impact of Socrates, one more reason why the Phaedrus should be considered the first one among the dialogues. For the preoccupation with method in the Phaedrus "was very naturally the first state into which a worthily reflecting scholar of Socrates, and one already possessed with the art, must have been transported by the mode of teaching pursued by that philosopher."[85]

It is obvious to the modern reader that Schleiermacher was in great error when he assumed that the Phaedrus is historically the first dialogue. Modern Plato interpreters generally agree that this dialogue comes shortly after the Republic. This historical error, however, does not mean that Schleiermacher misinterpreted Plato's philosophy. As we have pointed out above, Schleiermacher was not really interested in the historical side of the problem. His mistake was that he identified the historical development of Plato's thought with the inner movement of Plato's philosophy as a whole. He sees Plato's work in its entirety and he sees what basic question arises from this work; he assumes that Plato began his writing by ask-

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[84] Ibid., I, 67 (59).

[85] Loc. cit.

ing this basic question at the very outset. Today we would say that Plato had to go through a long period of "trial and error," which period comes to its end with the Republic. The Parmenides is a critical review of the earlier period, not eliminating it but giving a critical summary of it and posing the question which grew out of the meticulous inquiries in the earlier dialogues. Schleiermacher was not aware of the fact that even Plato could not ask the question properly when he began his writing and that for him too the finding of the answer presupposed the finding of the proper question. This historical mistake, however, did not keep Schleiermacher from understanding the nature of Plato's philosophy. The discussion of dialectics in the Phaedrus does indeed exhibit the nature of Platonic dialectics. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who himself follows the modern chronology of the Platonic dialogues, points out that he who conceives of the work of a thinker as an uninterrupted development from the beginning to the end

> should, like Schleiermacher, put the Phaedrus at the beginning. The Phaedrus is really the gateway for the whole of Plato's work. This dialogue actually does discuss the problem of Platonic writing; because of this fact Schleiermacher follows the assumptions of the antique interpreters who consider the Phaedrus as the oldest among the dialogues.[86]

During the further development of his thought, says Schleiermacher, Plato does not make the art of composition so

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[86] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Platon (2 vols.; Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1920), I, 125.

much the exclusive subject as in his first dialogue. The more the actual objects of philosophy begin to crystalize and the more he perfected the art of dialectics, the more dialectics becomes the intrinsic principle rather than the explicit object of discussion. This, however, does not mean that Plato relinquished the spirit of Socrates from his works. Rather

> the power which Socrates possessed of convincing and influencing the mind with all the apparent artlessness of his arguments, must still have appeared to Plato as a master-art never surpassed, and have filled him with admiration and love. This then, under such circumstances and in such a mind, inclined by nature to favour the notion of the unity of the two, naturally exhibited itself in a reference of philosophy to art, the process of which at the same time contained an explanation and defence of his transition from the latter to the former. And, next, his immediate choice of rhetoric, which was not his own art, is conceivable upon the grounds that, more than poetry, it aims at conviction, and because he could not compare what Socrates effected in it by the science of dialectics, with anything nearer than what the sophists and rhetoricians thought to effect by mere empiricism.[87]

This detailed presentation of Schleiermacher's introduction to the Phaedrus serves as an example of the manner in which Schleiermacher proceeds in his whole interpretation of Plato. It would lead too far if we would discuss all of the introductions in equally detailed manner. Having this example as our background, however, we can now proceed in our discussion in more general terms, since Schleiermacher's hermeneutic process remains the same all through his interpretation of Plato.

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[87]Schleiermacher, Platon, I, 68-69 (60-61).

The Protagoras which is the middle member of the elementary group develops the art of dialectics further. The main purpose of this dialogue is "to proclaim with high praise the Socratic mode of conversation as the proper form of all truly philosophic communication."[88] In this dialogue dialectics is developed in its opposition to the sophists. It shows how "eristic talk easily lends itself to leading away from the inner nature of matters" and how, on the other hand, "the form of the dialogue very soon brings to light what everyone's true opinion is" and thus discovers the source of error.[89] Yet the Protagoras "is not only a praiseful recognition of the truly philosophic art form"; rather "the scientific content of this dialogue has been enlarged when compared to the Phaedrus" just as the art of dialectics itself has been developed further.[90] The Protagoras, namely, deepens the question of the relation between knowing and teaching while wrestling with the question of whether or not virtue can be taught.[91] This is the beginning of Plato's attempt to define more clearly the nature of knowledge, since

> the subordinate question of the unity or plurality of virtue is only a particular case belonging to the more general investigation into the nature of unity or plurality, or the manner in which the general ideas communicate with particulars, so that the doc-

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[88] Ibid., I, 282.

[89] Ibid., I, 230.

[90] Ibid., I, 232.

[91] Ibid., I, 233.

> trine of ideas here begins to pass from the mythical province into the scientific.[92]

The Parmenides, the last dialogue in the elementary group, has this question as its main subject. The Phaedrus had praised and admired the philosophic urge and its organ, dialectics, but it remained in the realm of the general. The Protagoras had presented the philosophic urge in various examples as compared to the sophistic method. The Parmenides, taking up the question of the Protagoras, grows equally out of the Phaedrus. The Phaedrus had presented the philosophic urge as essentially striving after communication;

> while in this dialogue it is represented in reference to the independent process of investigation which must precede communication: how, I mean, it looks in its purity to truth alone, and rejecting every collateral point, and all alarm at any result whatever, starts only upon the necessary assumption, that scientific knowledge is possible, and searches for it in well arranged excursions.[93]

There is a certain amount of uncertainty in Schleiermacher's interpretation of the Parmenides. More than usually he refers the reader to the text itself, pointing out only the general structure of the dialogue. This may be so partly because he did not see that the Parmenides is a much later dialogue than the Republic, criticizing rather than preparing the theory of the ideas. In this respect the uncertainty with which he interprets the Parmenides indirectly corroborates his

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[92] Loc. cit.

[93] Ibid., II, 86-87 (114).

assumption that the dialogues can be fully understood only if viewed in their natural order.

This, however, does not imply that Schleiermacher had no understanding of the nature of the dialogue. But his hermeneutic method could not bear its full fruits, since it consists largely in pointing out the relations among the dialogues. Still, his observations with regard to the internal relations of the elements within the Parmenides betray a rather cogent understanding of this dialogue. In Schleiermacher's terms it is a statement of highest praise when he compares the Parmenides

> to those imaginative and pregnant compositions, which, under the modest name of tales (Maerchen), represent the inward form of things, and the true history of the world, with a richness and a depth which no one can ever be fully conscious of having fathomed to the bottom; even though perhaps many readers who go along with their author in thought and composition, may sometimes discover particular relations which have lain concealed from the composer himself.[94]

Schleiermacher does not want to say that the Parmenides is a mysterious saga which "contains treasures of mysterious wisdom hidden in a dark sanctuary and accessible only for a few." Such a view he rejects as "delusion."[95] But he is aware of a depth in this dialogue which he yet cannot fathom enough. This will be quite evident when we arrive at the discussion of his interpretation of the Sophist, for in that dialogue he succeeds

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[94] Ibid., II, 97.

[95] Ibid., II, 85.

in bringing to light what he could not do in the Parmenides.

The Parmenides ends the first group. This dialogue poses the problem of reconciling being and becoming. The vision of being as eternally unchanging truth has been presented as the object of philosophy. This vision, however, is opposed by an equally immediate intuition of becoming, of eternal flux and change.

> Therefore the highest and most general problem of philosophy is exclusively this—to apprehend and fix the essential in that fleeting chaos, to display it as the essential and good therein, and so drawing forth to full light of consciousness the apparent contradiction between those two intuitions, to reconcile it at the same time.[96]

There are two ways of solving this contradiction. One way is by starting from the vision of the essential and progressing from there to the consciousness of the contradiction. With regard to science this is the direct method of procedure. It is the method which is fitting for the constructive dialogues. The other method of solving the contradiction is the indirect method which has been developed in the elementary dialogues. It begins with an awareness of the contradiction and seeks to resolve it by striving for the unity. This is still the method employed in the second group, even though it begins to change, the closer the third group is approached. The application of this method to actual scientific content marks the mediating link between Plato's original intuition of philosophy with which

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[96] Ibid., III, 5 (171).

he begins in elementary fashion and his constructive presentation with which he ends systematically.

> If we look to the mere structure, a decided transition may be pointed out from the Phaedrus through the Protagoras to the Gorgias, and from this to the Euthydemus and Sophist, in which the form of utter negation comes out most strongly.
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> And in like manner all these dialogues are penetrated throughout by a germ, continually growing and treated only as an indirect object, of the positive, in the indication of true science and art and the objects of them, until at last it leaves this connection with the negative and comes out alone, when at the same time the whole of the indirect treatment passes into one of an opposite form.[97]

The contradiction between being and becoming is reflected in physics by the difference between essence and appearance and in ethics by the difference between the good and mere pleasure or impression. Thus it is the task of the second group - which is devoted to the evolving of the two "sciences" - to show how true art and true science are not found as long as essence and appearance, good and pleasure are mixed up. Plato goes two ways in order to achieve this goal. On the one hand he tries to show how what has been held to be art and science is not really art and science; on the other hand he tries to construct the basis for these two sciences from the intuition of the contradiction between being and change. These two approaches are never completely separated, but are always closely interrelated.[98]

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[97] Ibid., III, 13 (178-179).

[98] Ibid., III, 6-7.

The Gorgias, together with the Theaetetus, opens the series which forms the second group. These two dialogues complement each other in so far as the former is concerned with the difference between the good and pleasure and the latter with the difference between essence and appearance.[99] The Gorgias shows how true knowledge of the good cannot be found in pleasure in as far as pleasure is confined to the realm of change; it is only in the transition from one opposite to another. The Theaetetus develops a parallel view with regard to physics; knowledge here cannot be found in merely empirical impressions, for they too are confined to the realm of change. Plato's view that both the theoretical and the practical must be treated in conjunction is expressed in many remarks scattered over the two dialogues. Yet it is put forth most strongly through the internal structure which connects the two dialogues in as far as they develop the first seeds of the emerging "sciences" of ethics and physics jointly.[100]

> It is precisely in this reconciliation of the two points of view, the theoretical and practical, brought about as it is, without uniting them so completely as to cancel all opposition between the two, that the still more artificial form of the subsequent dialogues consists [i.e., of the dialogues in the second group].[101]

This art of joining together opposite elements because of their higher unity which philosophy discovers, has been pre-

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[99] Ibid., III, 18.

[100] Ibid., III, 173.

[101] Ibid., III, 18 (183).

pared by the Parmenides. It is the steadily and consequently growing result of the Socratic heritage[102] in as far as it effects the idea of knowledge as such, i.e., the discovery of the difference and relation between being and change, as well as the difference and relation among the sciences which are based on that idea of knowledge.[103]

The theory of knowledge and truth is further developed in the Theaetetus. Knowledge is now characterized as true imagination (Vorstellung). Socrates shows how the act of perception itself is subject to the law of change and how it therefore cannot penetrate to being and how therefore truth must be found beyond perception. Socrates tries to define the realm of wrong imagination and - according to the indirect method - to find a definition of knowledge. Yet he cannot succeed because he discovers that wrong imagination rests on an ununderstandable misunderstanding of understanding. Thus he concludes that true understanding must be defined first and that only then wrong understanding can be defined. In other words, here again we have a transition from the indirect method to the direct method; that which forces this transition is the basic insight of Socrates, namely

> that it is impossible that pure knowledge should lie within the same sphere as error, and that truth or

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[102] Ibid., III, 13.

[103] Ibid., III, 180.

> falsehood cannot be predicated of the former, but only possession or non-possession.[104]

Yet even this dialogue remains in the more negative stage, since it ends with no positive doctrine concerning the nature of knowledge, just as the Protagoras did not solve the question of whether or not virtue can be taught. In both cases Socrates is driven to statements about the nature of his object - virtue here, knowledge there - which he cannot truly substantiate.[105] The unsolved state in which the Theaetetus ends forces the interpreter to look for the solution in the subsequent dialogues.

The Meno establishes the basis to a solution in his discovery of the immortality of the soul. When Socrates discussed the problem of knowing and not knowing in the Theaetetus, he said that he wants to consider learning and forgetting as something which lies in between the two. The discussion of learning and forgetting is the subject of the Meno.[106] The doctrine of anamnesis which had been presupposed more in form of myth so far[107] is now made explicit in philosophic manner. The

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[104] Ibid., III, 176 (194).

[105] Ibid., III, 179.

[106] Ibid., III, 326.

[107] See above, p. 68.

fact that it had been presupposed all the time shows that with this doctrine of immortality all science stands and falls.[108] The Meno not only serves as a basis for the subsequent dialogues but also as a cornerstone for the previous dialogues of the second group as well as for a key to a deeper understanding of many elements within the first group.[109]

> If it is kept in view, on the one hand, how these two questions, that of the possibility of communicating knowledge, and that of immortality, are brought into connection with one another; and on the other, how the question of the possibility of attaining to knowledge is here reduced within the other, of the possibility of attaining to virtue, and of the nature of virtue generally, it will be seen that the Menon belongs quite as immediately to the Gorgias as to the Theaetetus,. . .inasmuch as the Menon is intended to draw the two still more close together, and to interweave them with one another.[110]

The main point in the Meno is the first beginning of Plato's view of the unity between thinking and being, a view which is sought but not found in the Parmenides and which is arrived at in the Sophist. While it was supposed in mythical terms since the Phaedrus, it now begins to enter the philosophic realm and it is that which makes possible the change from the indirect method to the direct method, in as far as now a constructive basis for the nature of knowledge has been discovered.

> This is the view which we obtain from the somewhat complicated relations of this dialogue, after placing ourselves upon that chief and corner-point from which alone an accurate survey of the whole can be made.[111]

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[108] Ibid., III, 228.

[109] Ibid., III, 334.

[110] Ibid., III, 328 (207).

[111] Ibid., III, 335 (214).

Schleiermacher also refers to the "unity between thinking and being" as "the identity of the real and the ideal" as we shall see later. His usage of the term "identity" has caused much confusion. Some interpreters have said that Schleiermacher means to say that thought is to be identified with nature and others have held that he identifies nature with thought. Yet neither interpretation seems to be adequate. As Flueckiger has pointed out recently, "one can call Schleiermacher a naturalist, which is just as one-sided as if one calls him an idealist."[112] Flueckiger, however, interprets Schleiermacher's dialectic opposites as "speculative philosophy of life," an interpretation which may be misleading if "philosophy of life" is understood in modern terms. It seems to be significant that Schleiermacher himself considers Plato's doctrine of anamnesis as an expression of what he calls the identity between the ideal and the real. As we shall see later, this identity should not be mistaken with the early Schelling's philosophy of identity. It rather is Schleiermacher's theory of the objectivity of the ideas in which both thought and reality participate. Although this identity can never be fully attained, it is yet the ultimate principle which gives stability to thinking and which constitutes the knowability of objective being. It is obvious that this theory is strictly in contrast to Kant's assumption of the Ding an sich.

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[112] Felix Flueckiger, Philosophie und Theologie bei Schleiermacher (Zuerich: Evangelisher Verlag [Zollikon], 1947), p. 181.

Schleiermacher's observation of the importance of the Meno has meanwhile been corroborated. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff goes so far as to say that the Meno is "the manifesto of the academy." He holds that "the Meno is a bridge reaching backward to the Gorgias and even as far back as the Protagoras and reaching forward to the main works."[113]

While the Meno sums up the first half of the second group, the Sophist, together with the Statesman and the Symposium, is the major part of its second half. The three latter dialogues form a trilogy. The Sophist discusses the basic problem of philosophy and science in terms of being and nonbeing, the Statesman takes up the problem by applying it to ethics, while the Symposium applies it to the philosopher.

There are three parts in the Sophist. The first and the last part is a discussion of art and the main part, in between, is a discussion of being and nonbeing. The Sophist does not say anything new about sophistry. The real subject of the dialogue has to be seen in the central part. Then, however, one will also find that the discussion of being and nonbeing is bound up with the two other parts in as far as the discussion of sophistry and art prepares for the question, dealing with the nature of the true statesman and of the philosopher.[114]

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[113]Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, op.cit., I, 274.

[114]Schleiermacher, Platon, IV, 131-133.

> The more closely, then, we consider this relation, the more we must be aware that there is here nothing to be rejected as mere shell, but that the whole dialogue is like a precious fruit of which a true connoisseur is glad to enjoy the outward peel at the same time with the fruit itself, because grown as the former is into the whole, it could not be separated without hurting the pure and proper relish of the latter.[115]

The Sophist praises the "purifying method of Socrates."[116] "With true justification one can consider the Sophist as the innermost center of all the indirect presentations of Plato, and one may say that it is the first complete image of the man himself."[117]

This extraordinary position of the Sophist is due as much to its form as it is due to the depth of the problems it treats. One may hold that that which begins and ends the Sophist is its real subject, namely the discussion of error in relation to nonbeing. Then, however, the middle part, i.e., the discussion of being and nonbeing, would be considered only as a means to the end of achieving a solution to that problem.

> But what reader, when he looks to the tenor of this digression, will not be compelled to apprehend in it immediately the most valuable and precious core of the dialogue, and that the more certainly, as here for the first time almost in the writings of Plato, the most inward sanctuary of philosophy is opened in a purely philosophical manner, and as, generally, being is bet-

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[115] Ibid., IV, 134 (249). "Relation" instead of "circumstance" (Verhaeltnis).

[116] Ibid., IV, 135.

[117] Ibid., IV, 138.

ter and more noble than non-being. For in the course of the investigation about non-being, exactly in the way in which this arose as a something higher in that about the Sophist, the question arises as to the community of ideas, upon which all real thought and all life in knowledge depends; and the notion of the life of that which is, and of the necessary identity and reciprocality of existence and knowledge is most regularly disclosed. And there is not anything within the sphere of philosophy more important, or any method peculiar to the views and method of Plato, more suitably adapted to conduct pupils and readers to the point than that which is here pursued. Let the reader but notice first how this the most inward, and, in point of extent, far from important kernel of the whole, exactly according to nature's method, forms itself into two halves externally, quite separate from one another, but quite grown together, and organically connected in the closest manner. For first, starting with the statement of the impossibility, that these persons should have reached the sphere of being who begin with mere unity, or they who continue to remain within the sphere of opposites; the real life of that which is, in which all opposites reciprocally penetrate and unite, is pointed out, and at the same time it is shown that knowledge can subsist neither without rest nor without motion, neither without station nor without flux, neither without constancy nor without progression, but in each pair requires a union of both. And let no one be misled by the apparently sceptical surprise at this required amalgamation of opposites, inasmuch as this is the last point at which the indirect method of demonstration, at the highest summit of which we here find ourselves, must terminate. And thus again, as if some quite new matter was arising, and without even the connection being pointed out, a descent is made from this sphere of the highest being into that of opposites, which are here represented by the great one of motion and rest, and it is shown that, first, community with opposites is founded upon the self-identity and diversity of that which is as common properties, and that in this sphere of diversity that which is exhibits itself necessarily, and in a variety of ways under the form of non-being, so that there can never be any opposite in respect of that highest being itself considered as such, but he who has not penetrated to the light of true being cannot, in general, advance further than to this non-being of true knowledge, and the ignorance of true being. That, therefore,

> the nature of all true philosophy is in fact here enunciated is a position requiring no further elucidation for him who is generally capable of apprehending it. Only let every reader notice the manner in which these conclusions are drawn, I mean, that Plato starts from the point at which every one necessarily finds himself, the sphere of conception, which is indeed at the same time that of contradictory opposites, showing that the establishment in this of any propositions respecting that which is carries with it exactly the same difficulties as the establishment of propositions respecting the non-existent, and that any one who thinks but to conceive or state anything, must first acquire a title of possession by virtue of which he can do so; and for this purpose the glance into that higher sphere of speculation is disclosed for all who can penetrate into it, as the only defence against the pretensions, not to be otherwise repulsed, of sophistical contentiousness. And because in our present dialogue the advance commences from this point, and presses forward up to that, the highest, immediately and without calling in the assistance of any mythical expedient, or otherwise deserting the course of the purest dialectics, we may fairly regard the Sophist as the inmost core of all indirect speculations of Plato, and to a certain degree as the first, and in its kind as a perfect image of the philosopher himself.[118]

We had to quote verbatim at such length because of two reasons. On the one hand, this passage may be considered the height of Schleiermacher's art of interpretation; and on the other hand, it is that point at which Schleiermacher's relation to Plato comes to light most clearly. The dialectics of the Sophist are in a way the model of Schleiermacher's own

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[118] Ibid., IV, 136-138 (251-254). Dobson translates Schleiermacher's Sein as "existence." The translation is difficult, since neither "existence" nor "being" is quite adequate. Nevertheless, we have changed the translation to make it read "being," since we use this word throughout as the translation of Sein.

dialectics. As Odebrecht sees it,

> The transcendental part of Schleiermacher's dialectics is the sole attempt in the history of philosophy to grasp, and to continue to work on, the problem of being in its full philosophic depth as Plato has posed it in the Sophist.[119]

Schleiermacher's Dialektik will be discussed later. At this time we only need to point out that the Sophist takes a rather central part in Schleiermacher's own work as it does in his view of Plato.

In closing our presentation of Schleiermacher's Plato interpretation we have to point out the relations which Schleiermacher sees between the Sophist and the Parmenides on the one hand and between the Sophist and the subsequent dialogues on the other hand. The Sophist in its discussion of sameness and difference and of being and nonbeing prepares the dialectical groundwork for the Timaeus. The Parmenides adds nothing in this respect and thus it seems plausible that the Parmenides should be considered earlier than the Sophist. If one furthermore compares the particular passages, such as the discussion of the one and the unit, then one finds that the Sophist has a much more certain way of dealing with the problem.

> The manner in which essential being and being in an other sense, namely by relation, is discussed and also the way in which ultimate being and being in

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[119]Rudolf Odebrecht, "Der Geist der Sokratik im Werke Schleiermachers," Geistige Gestalten und Probleme, ed. Hans Wenke ("Eduard Spranger zum 60. Geburtstag"; Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1942), pp. 103 ff.

> the realm of opposites is discussed and separated gives the key to all that which appears to be amphilogous in the Parmenides.[120]

The Statesman, i.e., the next dialogue after the Sophist, corresponds to the Sophist as no two other Platonic dialogues correspond to each other, only that in the Sophist the immediate subject of the Statesman is the genuine and the noble.[121] Again Schleiermacher points out the structural relations which exist between the two dialogues. Again we find that there is a discussion about art. As the philosopher in the Sophist was occasionally characterized as an artist who separates with the purpose of cleansing, so the statesman is here described as an artist who connects and whose principal task consists in bringing and holding together that which tends to fall apart.[122]

Yet, the inner connection with the Sophist consists in the concept of measurement which is evolved in the Statesman. The interpenetration of change and being which was the subject of the Sophist is here complemented by the idea of relative and absolute measure through which the mixture of change and being can be grasped.[123] Since the doctrine of measure is stated in positive terms, we can note the transition here to

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[120] Schleiermacher, Platon, IV, 144-145.

[121] Ibid., IV, 252.

[122] Ibid., IV, 255.

[123] Ibid., IV, 257.

the constructive method of presentation which is plausible, for the indirect method has found its height in the Sophist. We can note here

> how the mimic and ironic mastery of description is less in the foreground, the more a scientific mode of presentation is developed.[124]

This mode of presentation is not quite developed yet, since the theory of measure is still supported by the myth of the golden age.[125]

The Symposium, finally, takes the place of the third dialogue in the trilogy. For some reason Plato must have changed his plan, for structurally the Symposium does not fit in with the two others, although as far as its content is concerned it carries out the original idea in as far as it treats of the philosopher. Schleiermacher's view on the meaning of the Symposium has been discussed above.

At this point we end our presentation of Schleiermacher's Plato interpretation for mainly two reasons. On the one hand his work on Plato remained unfinished. He did not publish more than a first volume of the third group, namely the Republic. Thus his discussion on the Phaedo and the Philebus remains also unfinished in so far as it lacks its necessary

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[124] Ibid., IV, 262 (275).

[125] Ibid., IV, 258.

complement in the discussions on the Critias and the Timaeus. Schleiermacher planned to write a postscript at the end of his work on Plato, but he never had occasion to do so since he could not finish this work.

Apart from this external reason for terminating our presentation at this point, we do so also because we have covered that part of the interpretation of Plato which is essential for the scope of this study. Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato's dialectics - and it is the dialectics in which we are interested - culminates with the introduction to the Sophist. The introduction to the Republic is beyond our immediate interest, since it consists mainly of a descriptive exposition of the dialogue, a fact which is all the more understandable if one takes into account Schleiermacher's view of the third group, namely that it follows the direct method of presentation.

C. Conclusion

The inquiry into Schleiermacher's work on Plato shows that his interest in the Platonic writings was not a passing interest only (as, for example, his interest in Spinoza). His references to Plato as "the divine man" who introduced him to the secrets not only of philosophy but of life in general are not merely expressions of enthusiasm which died as he went on to study other philosophers. The continuing labor of trans-

lating and interpreting Plato is the most expressive sign for the paramount place which Plato occupies in Schleiermacher's life. As we shall see later, Plato is the only philosopher to which Schleiermacher refers positively in his principal philosophic work, i.e., the Dialektik. One should keep in mind that Schleiermacher was not first of all a scholar of antiquity but a professor of theology, that he furthermore was a preacher and a religious educator, that he served as secretary for the academy of the sciences, that he took active part in the affairs of the administration of the Church and that he, besides his many occupations, was a man who had time to devote himself to his family.[126] It seems reasonable to assume that his interest in Plato was more than a passing interest, for nobody who carries a load of work as Schleiermacher did translates and interprets "on the side" so complex a group of literature as the Platonic dialogues if he has not a very personal interest at stake. Under such circumstances one feels justified in asking whether the work of a man who had such a wide interest in Plato may not be illuminated if one seeks to find traces of kinship between both thinkers.

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[126]For Schleiermacher's family life see the report by his adopted son: Ehrenfried von Willich, Aus Schleiermacher's Hause (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1909). For Schleiermacher's own reflection on the nature of work and leisure see his witty report to the academy of the scienees on Plato's view of medicine: "Ueber Platons Ansicht von der Ausuebung der Heilkunst" (1825), Werke, Part III, III, 273 ff.

No one will say that Schleiermacher neglected his other duties because of his work on Plato, just as no one will say, for example, that Jonathan Edwards neglected his pastoral duties because of his theological work. Yet no one in the field of studies concerned with classical antiquity will say that Schleiermacher's work on Plato was an amateur's production. Although it seems that, so far, nothing has been published which treats of his work in detail, again and again one encounters references which indicate that Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato holds a key position in modern Plato-research. One understands Boekh's unrestricted praise with which he greeted the work if one is conscious of the fact that it was practically the first modern attempt on the Continent to undertake to view the dialogues as a whole, interpreted through their own intrinsic principles, namely through Socratic dialectics. Werner Jaeger is not the only modern scholar who agrees with Boekh.[127] Julius Stenzel, who made an exhaustive study of the development of Plato's dialectics, reaffirms Schleiermacher's approach.[128] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff comments that "Schleiermacher opens a new epoch for the understanding of Plato."[129] Dilthey says in his famous essay on the origin of hermeneutics that we have a

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[127]See above, pp. 38 and 40.

[128]See below, p. 206.

[129]Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, op. cit., I, 5.

real understanding of Plato only since Schleiermacher, who unlocked the dialogues for philological research.[130]

It is, of course, evident today that Schleiermacher's order of the dialogues is to some extent erroneous in so far as chronology is concerned. Although there is still today some doubt as to the precise sequence of the dialogues, the scholars in general agree on a chronology which assumes that the Republic stands in the middle of Plato's work and that a new period in his thinking began with the Parmenides.[131] Yet the historical inaccuracy does not necessarily invalidate Schleiermacher's interpretation. As we have noted above, knowledge of the historical sequence does not necessarily bring with it an understanding of the nature of Plato's philosophy. By the same token, a misunderstanding of the actual chronology of the dialogues does not necessarily exclude an understanding of their nature. Schleiermacher's mistake was that he identified the inner movement of Plato's philosophy with the sequence in which the dialogues have been produced. He had before him the unordered dialogues and he intuited their inner structure and interrelation. He chose that dialogue as the first in which the problem of this inner structure is treated most explicitly.

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[130]Wilhelm Dilthey, "Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik," Philosophische Abhandlungen (Festschrift fuer Christoph Sigwart; Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1900), p. 200.

[131]Ritter has computed in table form the chronologies which have been advanced by various scholars during the last sixty-five years. See Constantin Ritter, Platon, sein Leben, seine Schriften, seine Lehre (2 vols.; Muenchen: Oskar Beck, 1910), I, 254.

Today it is held that the Phaedrus was written after the Republic. Schleiermacher was right in his judgment that the Phaedrus exhibits the most explicit treatment of Plato's own manner of writing, since Plato indeed had reason to reflect upon his method after he had reached a certain impass in his thinking.[132] Schleiermacher's mistake was that he assumed that the Phaedrus should therefore stand at the beginning of the chronological order of the dialogues. To have Plato begin with a detailed statement of the nature of his philosophy is like having the Bostonians say to each other, while dumping the tea into the ocean, "We now take the first step in creating the United States of America."

Yet even the reason which he gives for placing the Phaedrus at the beginning, although it seems to be much too mature for taking such an early place, is a reason which exhibits his understanding of Plato's thought. Schleiermacher argues that the philosopher has indeed a presentiment of the whole even when he takes the first step. It seems to be the genius of Schleiermacher's interpretation that he strives to interpret only with such principles as are implicit to the object itself. We shall discuss below how his own philosophy leads toward a "higher realism." His interpretation of Plato is an actual example for what he developed later on theoret-

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[132] Compare Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's comment; see above, p. 77.

ically. He is infinitely concerned with the object. He strongly dislikes empty speculation. Theories which have no foundation in reality are for him nothing but brain waves. He "misplaces" the Phaedrus and also others of the dialogues and yet he makes these mistakes for the right reasons.

Our acquaintance with Plato's writings is not sufficient to allow for a really penetrating analysis of all the details of Schleiermacher's interpretation. Yet anyone with some acquaintance of the subject-matter can discern the tendency to ultimate objectivity with which Schleiermacher interprets. It is an objectivity approximating Platonic theoria. The observer at one and the same time seeks to become one with the object and to retain a critical distance from it. Schleiermacher's reverence for the objectively given is exemplified, for example, in his discussion of the Euthyphro. Because of certain reasons it is necessary for him to place this early dialogue at a place which is much too late in Plato's development. Consequently this dialogue, compared with those which surround it, appears to be a work of poor quality, so poor in fact that it seems to be not Plato's at all. Schleiermacher actually ponders the thought of eliminating it from the list of the genuine dialogues. Yet he refrains from taking this step because he sees in the Euthyphro such genuinely Platonic features that he feels not justified for removing it from the

list. Again the historical "result" was wrong but the observation was right because it gave precedence to the nature of the object over the "wishes" of the subject.

Yet, although Schleiermacher's historical order of the dialogues seems today inadequate, this does not necessarily mean that his order was altogether "wrong." Quite the contrary is the case. We must keep in mind that for him "earlier" does not mean "of lesser importance" and that "later" does not necessarily mean "culmination." As we have seen, in Schleiermacher's view the culmination of Plato's dialectics is achieved with the Sophist and the Statesman. This means that he actually put those dialogues at the center of attention which today are considered to be among the most important ones. Schleiermacher's view of dialectics as ascent and descent puts the emphasis on the ascent. The descent is "only" the formation of the various positive sciences, i.e., of that which changes with each generation. The ascent is that which is the much more important part of dialectics, since it is the rising above the contradiction toward the intuition of the highest unity as uniting all opposites. The juxtaposition of the Republic made it possible for Schleiermacher to deal with the Parmenides, Sophist and Statesman in their interrelation and to bring to light the problem of the interpenetration of being and change. Thus he has put into the center of his interpretation that problem which today is consid-

ered the problem with which Plato dealt at the peak of his philosophizing.

This new understanding of Plato is, as we see it, a fruit of Schleiermacher's "higher realism," of his reverence for the object. One may state the same fact by saying that he himself employs Socratic-Platonic dialectics in his interpretation of Plato. He knows nothing more immediate for his interpretation than the object, i.e., the text itself. His analysis of the texts proceeds in Socratic manner. First he weighs the opinions about the dialogues. Then he concludes that there must be some error, since these opinions contradict each other. Instead of seeking to reconcile these opinions by looking for their least common denominator - a method which is used so often and which yet never can lead to truth - Schleiermacher turns to the text. There he finds elements which indeed, if taken separately, may justify such opinions. Yet these opinions are wrong because they remain in the realm of the empirical, in the realm of opposites. They can see only that which is on the face of the object and they cannot see its inner structure and therefore they cling only to one part or the other, never able to grasp the whole. Then Schleiermacher weighs the opposite elements and as he makes fruitful the tension between them he penetrates beyond the empirical and finally discovers the inner unity of the whole. Now the interpretation of the ele-

ments in the light of their inner unity is possible, an interpretation which leads to the vision of the whole as meaningful organism.

We have presented the Phaedrus as a chief example for this method, and we can see now how this method is nothing but an application of those principles which Plato had developed as dialectics and which had culminated in the Sophist. Schleiermacher is able to rediscover these principles because he employs these very principles himself in his search for the truth of the dialogues of Plato. In this respect Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato is, indeed, a master work and we may understand now why his contemporaries as well as ours join in the praise of Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato.

We have mentioned above that Schleiermacher possessed certain preconditions for the interpretation of Plato.[133] Now we have come to the conclusion that he could understand Plato because he used a Platonic method in interpreting the dialogues. This suggests once more the inner kinship between the spirit of the two men. It is for the subsequent chapters to discuss Schleiermacher's own thought, to follow some of its characteristic movements and to seek to discover therein that inner kinship. The ultimate goal must be to arrive at the core of the thought of the two philosophers. If the innermost centers both coincide, we shall be able to understand their inner kinship, whatever external differences may exist between the two.

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[133] See above, p. 44 ff.

CHAPTER III

DIALECTICS IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S WEIHNACHTSFEIER AND IN HIS THEORY OF INTERPRETATION

A. Schleiermacher's dialogue: The Weihnachtsfeier

As early as 1801 Schleiermacher mentioned in a letter to Friedrich Schlegel that he desired to write dialogues of his own, a plan which had come with his studies in Plato. Interestingly enough, Schleiermacher planned to write first of all dialogues of moral content which might serve as "avant-coureurs." Later on speculative dialogues were to follow.[1] In another letter, written in Stolp (1802) he again mentioned that he would soon write Platonic dialogues and that he looked forward to this as a kind of recreation from all the labors of detailed critical work which he had to do in connection with his translation.[2]

Although the plan of writing dialogues must have been quite vivid at some time in Schleiermacher's life, he wrote only two: a moral dialogue, Ueber das Anstaendige[3]; and later on (1805) the Weihnachtsfeier, a speculative dialogue. The latter

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[1] Schleiermacher, Briefe, III, 258.

[2] Ibid., III, 370.

[3] Ibid., IV, 510 ff.

is an especially interesting document for the study of Schleiermacher's development, since it stands as a landmark between the Reden and the Christian Faith. In Schelling's opinion, the Weihnachtsfeier documents the fact that "the author of the Reden has an equally good command over delicate measure as over strength of thought and expression."[4] Dilthey holds that the Weihnachtsfeier can be considered to some extent as the Christian Faith in nuce.[5]

It is interesting to note that Schleiermacher's first attempt to present something like a systematic development of his world view and theology is an attempt to write a Platonic dialogue, modeled after the fashion of the Symposium. Schleiermacher himself thought of the Weihnachtsfeier as a Platonic dialogue; and Schelling comments that "the speeches of the men [in the Weihnachtsfeier] bear witness to the fact that they are familiar with Plato in the German tongue."[6] Yet it is equally interesting to note that Schleiermacher never again tried to write dialogues and that he was not pleased with the results in the Weihnachtsfeier. In review he discovered that the Weihnachtsfeier is far from approaching the perfect form of a mature Platonic dialogue.[7] We shall see later how Schleiermacher carried

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[4]Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, Saemmtliche Werke (Stuttgart and Augsburg: J. G. Cotta, 1860), Part I, VII, 510.

[5]Dilthey, Leben Schleiermacher's, p. 775.

[6]Schleiermacher, Werke, Part I, VII, 500.

[7]Schleiermacher, Briefe, II, 50.

out what he thought of as the testament of Plato on a different level and with a mastery that by far surpasses his attempt to imitate the dialogues directly. At this time, however, it is noteworthy that he seeks to write his first really systematic work in Platonic spirit, and, in spite of its shortcomings, it still contains so many genuinely Platonic elements that, if these elements are observed, it adds to our understanding of the Platonic character of his thought.

The Reden had proclaimed his vision in enthusiastic terms and more in the form of the free flow of the inspired seer's language rather than in the form of methodical, systematic presentation. It is the vision of a world in which religion is at the basis of everything. Religion is the intuition of the universe in its entirety:

> The vision of the universe - I beg you to befriend yourself with this concept - is the pivot of my entire speech, it is the highest formula of religion through which you can find every element in religion, through which one can exactly define its essential nature and its limits.[8]

The religious man is not merely centered in himself; rather, in seeking God, he loses himself in the cosmos and thus the purpose of the entire cosmos is realized in him. Spinoza is set up as ideal:

> You yourself are a compendium of mankind. In a certain sense your personality embraces the whole of human nature, and human nature in all its manifestations is nothing but your own self: multiplied, formed more dis-

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[8]Schleiermacher, Ueber die Religion, p. 55.

tinctly and eternalized in all its changes.[9]

> Spinoza was filled with the spirit of the cosmos, the infinite was his beginning and his end, the universe was his only and eternal love; with sacred incense and with deep humility he mirrored himself in the eternal world, and he permitted himself to be a loveworthy mirror of the eternal world.[10]

Without religion thought and life are dehumanized; man is led away from God and thus from his own destiny.

> To strive for speculation and for praxis without religion is hybris, it is animosity against the gods; it is the unsacred mind of Prometheus who cowardly stole what he could have demanded and expected calmly.[11]

> What shall result from the triumph of speculation, of the completed and well rounded idealism, if religion is not its counterbalance, making it aware of a higher realism, higher than that which idealism has subdued so courageously and with so much justification? While idealism dreams of building the universe it will destroy the universe, turning it into an unworthy shadow, into a mere allegory of our own limitedness.[12]

Schleiermacher could never agree with a philosophy that had the autonomous self as its basis, grounded in nothing but its awareness of the independent ego.[13] His ideal of a theonomous culture is not only the pivot of the second speech

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[9] Ibid., p. 99.

[10] Ibid., p. 55.

[11] Ibid., p. 52.

[12] Ibid., p. 54.

[13] See above, pp. 44 ff.

in the Reden, but, set forth in youthful enthusiasm there, it remains the pivot of all of his thought and work. It calls for a program on whose realization he worked during his entire life. What he later defines as "the contract between religion and science" is basically present even in the Reden. In general terms it is the interpenetration of philosophy and science, of art and of religion.

> When the philosophers shall be religious and seek God like Spinoza and when the artists shall be pious and love Christ like Novalis, then the great resurrection shall be celebrated in both worlds.[14]

Novalis in turn points to Schleiermacher. Novalis too sees the danger of destruction in the irreligiosity of the age.

> The hatred against religion has naturally and consequently extended to all objects of enthusiasm, it has brought into disrepute phantasy and feeling, morality and love for art, future and past, and it has barely succeeded in putting man at the top of the series of the beings in nature; it has turned the infinite, creative music of the spheres into the monotonous rattling of a monstrous mill which - driven by and swimming on the stream of chance - is supposed to be a mill in itself without architect or miller, a true perpetuum mobile, a mill grinding itself.[15]

Novalis likewise aspires after a covenant between philosophy and religion. He invites the philosophers to join "the peace makers" and "to view with youthful love the miraculous spendour of nature, of history and of mankind." Then, pointing to Schleiermacher, Novalis goes on to say:

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[14]This passage is added to the Reden in the second edition (1806). See Schleiermacher's Werke, Part I, I, 190.

[15]This passage is taken from Novalis' essay, "Die Christenheit oder Europa," reprinted in Novalis: Religioese Schriften (Koeln: Marcan-Block, 1923), p. 103.

> To a brother I shall guide you, he shall speak to you, and your hearts shall open. Again you shall embrace and recognize your beloved but deadened presentiment of religion , dressed with a new body. It has been vaguely before you but the earthly, stubborn reason could not grasp it.
>
> This brother is the heart beat of the new age. . . He has made a veil for the saintly virgin religion which reveals the heavenly form of her members and which yet protects her more chastely than any other. . . . For me it is nothing but the solemn call for a new first congregation, it is the beat of a passing angelic herald's wing. These are the first pains; everyone must be ready for a new birth![16]

It had been at the turn of the century when Schleiermacher first presented his vision of a theonomous culture in the Reden and when Novalis praised him as the herald of a new age. Thirty years later, after Schleiermacher had spent a life on academic work which was meant to contribute toward a realization of these early visions, he redefined the same objectives in terms of a "contract between science and religion." This formula of the contract has often been misunderstood; it seems that most of the misunderstanding of what is meant by the "contract" results from an oversight of Schleiermacher's dialectics. Some interpreters take this formula of the contract as meaning some kind of adjustment which religion has to make to science. Yet Schleiermacher rather speaks of an adjustment which science has to make to religion, or rather he does not speak of something so superficial at all. Keeping in mind that

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[16] Ibid., p. 109.

his open letters to his colleague Luecke, the famous Sendschreiben an Luecke, were written rather late in his life, we may seek in these letters the reflection of what he strove for in his work.

> The reformation which is at the beginning of our Church must have as its goal the purpose of effecting an eternal contract between the living Christian faith and scientific research, free to cover everything, so that faith does not hinder science and that science does not exclude religion. If this were not the goal of the reformation then it would not suffice for our needs and we would need another one from whatever struggles it would have to emerge. Yet it is my certain conviction that the basis of this contract has been laid in the reformation and it is only necessary for us to grow conscious of our task in order that we may fulfil it. Enough has been done for a beginning: each one has been amply exhorted, and those who take part in the building of both, the Church and science, are asked to contribute doubly to the solution of the task.[17]

A close analysis of this passage shows that Schleiermacher by no means speaks of an adjustment which one element has to perform with regard to the other one. One may rather

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[17] Schleiermacher, Werke, Part I, II, 617-618: "Wenn die Reformation, aus deren Anfaengen unsere Kirche hervorgegangen ist, nicht das Ziel hat, einen ewigen Vertrag zu stiften zwischen dem lebendigen christlichen Glauben und der nach allen Seiten freigelassenen, unabhaengig fuer sich arbeitenden wissenschaftlichen Forschung, so dass jener nicht diese hindert, und diese nicht jenen ausschliesst: so leistet sie unseren Beduerfnissen nicht Genuege, und wir beduerfen noch einer andern, wie und aus was fuer Kaempfen sie sich auch gestalten moege. Meine feste Ueberzeubung aber ist, der Grund zu diesem Vertrage sei schon damals gelegt, und es thue nur Noth, dass wir zum bestimmteren Bewusstsein der Aufgabe kommen, um sie auch zu loesen. Am ersten fehlt es nicht: gemahnt ist jeder genug, und zwiefach aufgefordert zur Loesung etwas beizutragen ist jeder der an beiden zugleich, am Bau der Kirche und am Bau der Wissenschaft, irgend einen thaetigen Anteil nimmt."

interpret his concept of the "contract" as something like a mere modus vivendi between religion on the one hand and science and philosophy on the other. This would mean that the enthusiastic vision of the Reden which foresaw a resurrection of science and art had been abandoned, and has now, with approaching age, been replaced by resignation which is merely content to keep the two elements apart so that each can live. Yet nothing could be further from what Schleiermacher intends to express.

He himself is one of those who take part in the building of both, science and the Church. This fact must under no circumstances be overlooked. He was devoted to philosophy and science as well as to theology, and this not by accident, because he happened to have "universal interests," not even because he wanted to be "modern" as well as "Christian" (K. Barth); his work in both fields is rather a vivid demonstration and necessary outcome of his truly Socratic-Platonic vision of life. In his Dialektik he has demonstrated his dialectic ascent to being and truth which is over and beyond the realm of opposites. When dealing with opposites, he deals with opposites that are different yet united. Thus they can not be simply adjusted to each other in order that the tension may be resolved, neither can they be simply separated, for then there is nothing but meaningless chaos. Rather must they be recognized in their essential relation, i.e., as opposite manifestations of that which is united in being. One may best understand what he means

with opposites when one thinks of them as polarities. In a polar relation neither of the two poles is to be identified with the other, while at the same time each pole is meaningful only in its relation to the other. Polar opposites are in tension and yet in relation with each other. Science and religion are such polar opposites. Both elements are truly understood if they are seen in their dialectical tension and relation. This tension and relation is the essence of Schleiermacher's "contract," and hence it is intelligible why all through his life he was devoted to philosophy and science as well as to the building of the Church, and why he at the same time insisted that neither part must be forced under the domination of the other.

Although it seems to us that one should not assume an absolute disjunction in Schleiermacher's development, one should on the other hand not overlook a change of temper which can be discerned if one compares the statements of the Reden with those of thirty years later. In between these two points in his life stretches the period of his work as a scholar who penetrated more and more into the detailed and complex problems which he had posed for himself when he first envisaged culture as one great religious cosmos. As we shall discuss below, he developed his views with greater and greater differentiation and articulation by increasing his use of Platonic dialectics, with which he was acquainted early in his career

and which he appropriated into his own thinking as his own philosophizing forced him to rethink for himself the many questions which arose from his approach.

Sometimes one encounters the opinion that Schleiermacher in his early years was more a "romantic" and that he later became more an "intellectual." There is a semantic problem involved in this distinction. One may say that Schleiermacher in his early days was full of youthful enthusiasm and that he became a more reflective thinker as he grew older. Yet it seems that he was a romantic all his life, if "romanticism" is taken to mean the synthesis between <u>eros</u> and <u>ratio</u>. After an age of rationalism the romantics strove to gain a new understanding for the powers of the soul. Yet this did not mean a repudiation of <u>ratio</u>; it rather meant the development of a world view which evolved from an approach in which <u>ratio</u> and <u>eros</u> were united. The romantics developed a new kind of scientific inquiry which we may call "science filled with <u>eros</u>." Their science was "filled with <u>eros</u>" because they embraced their objects with love, yet they strove for a scientific approach at the same time, since they evolved modern methods which assured accurate results rather than phantasy. Thus Novalis could come to seemingly contradictory statements in his <u>Fragments</u> - statements, however, which are not actually contradictory but which only depict the two elements that the romantics strove to unite.

> The poet understands nature better than the scientist.[18]
>
> Philosophy is not much without ecstasis, grasping consciousness and replacing everything else.[19]

And at the same time:

> I am convinced that one reaches true revelation rather through cold technical reason and through steady moral sense than through phantasy; phantasy seems to lead only into the kingdom of ghosts (Gespensterreich), that antipode of the true heaven.[20]

In his novel, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, Novalis interprets the fall as the separation of eros and wisdom, while salvation is interpreted as the unification of the two. Schleiermacher comments on this novel:

> The Ofterdingen. . .pertains not only to love and mysticism. . .but also to a wealth of knowledge which is at the basis of it all. It exhibits a great reverence for knowledge, something so rare with people of this kind. Knowledge here is related to the highest, to the vision of the world and of God.[21]

This tendency in the romantic movement to synthesize the emotional and the rational faculties of man produced a fresh approach in many a field of methodical inquiry. Schleiermacher's translation of Plato, for example, is an instance of the new way in which philosophy was beginning to approach its objects. We shall see later how he developed the principle

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[18]This and the following quotations are taken from Novalis' "Fragments," reprinted in his Religioese Schriften, p. 64.

[19]Ibid., p. 62.

[20]Ibid., p. 30.

[21]Schleiermacher, Briefe, I, 309.

that hermeneutics has to achieve the unification of the "psychological" and the "grammatical" methods.

He lived in an age which struggled with the problem of finding a synthesis between man's emotional and rational faculties. Plato became for him the guide to a solution of this problem. He appropriated Platonic dialectics as that method which leads man beyond his finitude to a transcendent ground in which everything has its ultimate substance and meaning. Thus his Platonism and his romanticism can be understood as complementary elements. As we turn to a discussion of the Weihnachtsfeier, which as we have seen stands between the Reden and the later works and can be considered as a mediating member between the earlier and the later period, we can observe how Platonic dialectics begins to form Schleiermacher's mode of thought. The Weihnachtsfeier is basically concerned with the same question with which the Reden were concerned, namely the question of the relation between religion and life; but it states the problem with greater differentiation and articulation.

The obvious subject of the Weihnachtsfeier is Christmas. The first part, more in the form of a novel, yet with many discussions interwoven, presents Christmas as it is celebrated in the family circle. The second part consists of several reports given by the women present. They relate to one another one of their experiences which turn out to be images of the mother and child symbol. The third part consists of three

speeches given by the men of the group. These speeches deal with the nature of Christ and the Church and the relation between the two. Yet, while Christmas is the obvious subject of the dialogue, its implicit problem is the nature of truth and knowledge. These two questions, namely the philosophical question concerning the nature of truth and knowledge and the theological question concerning the nature of Christ and the Church, are dealt with in conjunction; the joint treatment of the two questions is in itself an expression of Schleiermacher's concept of the "contract." This concept is most explicit in the last speech when Eduard says that

> no one can have within himself true and living science without being also within the Church. He may externally repudiate the Church but not internally.[22]

Eduard arrives at this statement by way of explicating the first few verses of the gospel of John. This explication is prepared by the entire dialogue.

During the course of the dialogue the problem of truth has been developed as the problem of a discrepancy between immediate experience and reflective thought. Reflective thought seems to destroy the unity of immediate experience, yet it is impossible to avoid reflection. The wisdom of the child is pre-

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[22]Schleiermacher, Weihnachtsfeier, p. 128: "Darum kann niemand wahrhaft und lebendig die Wissenschaft in sich haben, der nicht selbst in der Kirche waere, sondern ein solcher kann die Kirche nur aeusserlich verleugnen, nicht innerlich."

sented as the ideal of knowledge which has as its content truth itself, i.e., truth which is not subject to change since it is without internal antithesis. Sophie, a little girl, has this truth. For her, experience is immediate, higher knowledge. Yet, as child, she cannot make explicit her higher knowledge; she just has it. When Leonhard - he is the representative of that mode of thought which is most clearly lost in the realm of opposites - asks the little girl whether she prefers happiness or sadness (Lustigkeit oder Traurigkeit), she is not able to grasp the force of the question.[23] Yet her answers say indirectly what Joseph says directly at the end of the dialogue. Joseph has not participated in any of the discussions. He comes in only after the speeches have been ended:

> Today I am like a child. As a child puts away sorrow and represses its sighs and holds back its tears as soon as it experiences a childish joy: so also for me the deep, unvanishing pain is dulled as never before. I feel at home and newly born in the better world in which pain and bewailing makes no sense and has no room. With joyful eye I view everything, even that which hurts deeply.[24]

Joseph has transcended the realm of opposites in which pleasure

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[23] Ibid., pp. 57-59.

[24] Ibid., p. 134: "Auch ich selbst bin ganz ein Kind geworden zu meinem Glueck. Wie ein Kind den kindischen Schmerz erstickt, und die Seufzer zurueckdraengt und die Traenen einsaugt, wenn ihm eine kindische Freude gemacht wird: so ist mir heute der lange, tiefe, unvergaengliche Schmerz besaenftigt, wie noch nie. Ich fuehle mich einheimisch und wie neu geboren in der besseren Welt, in der Schmerz und Klage keinen Sinn hat und keinen Raum."

and pain are the only realities, realities which - if taken empirically - have no other existence except in constant change. His higher joy is not just a continuous pleasure from which all pain is excluded; rather it includes quite explicitly "even that which hurts deeply." This is the wisdom of the child and as such it is that wisdom which Schleiermacher found in Socrates when he repudiates (in the Gorgias) the sophists and shows that the good must be found beyond the realm of mere change and opposites.[25] Knowledge of the good brings with it an understanding of pleasure and pain as polarities. The good is not in either pole; there is a constant change from one to the other. But both pleasure and pain participate in the good; and thus Joseph can say that through Christmas he has come into a state of eternal joy which includes even the deepest sorrow, since that eternal joy is knowledge of the good which unites the polar opposites.[26]

Yet not only with regard to the problem of pain and

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[25]See above, p. 84. Goethe, for reasons similar to those of Schleiermacher, arrives at a similar view. In the "Paedagogische Provinz" (Wilhelm Meister) he describes Christianity as reverence of the highest order. The Christian religion for Goethe is "das Letzte, wozu die Menschheit gelangen konnte und musste. Aber was gehoerte dazu, die Erde nicht allein unter sich liegen zu lassen und sich auf einen hoeheren Geburtsort zu berufen, sondern auch Niedrigkeit und Armut, Spott und Verachtung, Schmach und Elend, Leiden und Tod als goettlich anzuerkennen, ja Suende selbst und Verbrechen nicht als Hindernisse, sondern als Foerdernisse des Heiligen zu verehren und lieb zu gewinnen."

[26]Compare Schleiermacher's concept of "joy in the Lord" in his "Christliche Sitte," Werke, Part I, XII, 42.

pleasure can we discern patterns of Platonic dialectics in the Weihnachtsfeier but also with regard to the problem of essential knowledge. The women in the dialogue represent the wisdom of the child in so far as they know immediately the essential nature of things. They do not go through a process of alienation and they therefore also do not have to go through the dialectic process which strives to overcome the alienation.[27] The women present the meaning of Christmas under the form of the mother and child image. Each of them relates an experience of some particular mother and child and each of these experiences is externally connected with Christmas. In one case one of the women saw a mother with her child in Church on Christmas eve and this mother and child were for her an image which contained the meaning of Christmas. In another case a sick child, not expected to live, is restored to health on Christmas eve. Yet, quite apart from these external relations to the festivity of Christmas, there is also an inner relation between these particular cases and Christmas itself. These particular cases of the mother-child relationship are related to the mother-child relation as appearances are related to the idea in Plato. Each mother and child represents Mary and Jesus, in the sense that the ultimate symbol of mother and child is presented again, the symbol being used as denoting the highest form of being. The women, not having gone through

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[27]Schleiermacher, Weihnachtsfeier, p. 66.

the process of alienation and therefore not through the process of dialectics, cannot make systematically explicit what the nature of their knowledge is. This will be the task of the men, as we shall see presently; but the women can give expression to the idea in terms which themselves are of symbolic nature, namely in terms of poetry. They sing a verse of a poem by Novalis which in itself explicates the Platonic idea-appearance relation.

> Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern,
> Maria, lieblich ausgedrueckt;
> Doch keins von allen kann dich schildern
> Wie meine Seele dich erblickt.
> Ich weiss nur, dass der Welt Getuemmel
> Seitdem mir wie im Traum verweht,
> Und ein unnennbar suesser Himmel
> Mir ewig im Gemuete steht.[28]

Thus the external form of the second part of the Weihnachts-feier is not one of a progressive series of speeches; the talks given by the women stand more or less unrelated side by side, since they are images which receive their meaning and so their internal relation among each other from the one ultimate image in which they all participate.

The third part, i.e., the speeches of the men, finally explicates the nature of alienation and of salvation. Eduard's speech, the last one in the series, is the most important one since it sums up and surpasses all that has been said before. The alienation from truth which had been characterized by the

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[28] Ibid., p. 76.

first speaker's inability to transcend the empirical realm is interpreted by Eduard in the third speech as that stage of existence which stands in need of salvation. The fall is defined as a clinging to the realm of becoming and change.

> The individual who clings to the formations of the earth and who seeks knowledge there - while knowledge should live within - is confined to becoming alone, is in a state of depravity and detriment which is nothing but discord and conflict. He can find his salvation only in the man.[29]

Women, like children, do not experience the fall as a clinging to change. They live much more from the true sources of life. The feminine principle is much more the principle of rest and receptivity while the masculine principle is much more the principle of motion and activity. While thus the solution for the women could be found so to speak on the level of the Republic, i.e., on the level of a more static theory of ideas, the solution for the men must be found on the level of the Parmenides, the Sophist and the Statesman, i.e., on a level which comes to terms with the problem of ultimate being in its relation to the interpenetration of rest and motion, of being and becoming.

In Christ becoming and being are united. The word is

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[29] Ibid., p. 126: "Der Einzelne aber, wie er sich anschliesst an die andern Bildungen der Erde, und sein Erkennen in ihnen sucht, da doch ihr Erkennen allein in ihm wohnt, dieser ist das Werden allein, und ist im Abfall und Verderben, welches ist die Zwietracht und die Verwirrung, und er findet seine Erloesung nur in dem Menschen an sich."

truth and knowledge of truth; the flesh is sensory and finite nature. The word is eternal being; the flesh is change and becoming. Thus, "the word was made flesh" means the appearance of truth, of the ultimate and the divine in the form of the finite and of change. Where both being and change are seen together, there truth is found.

> Therefore we celebrate [in Christmas] nothing else than what we are in our entirety, human nature or whatever we may call it, viewed and known through the divine principle.[30]

In Christ the essential nature of man is made manifest. Christ is the archetypal man (Ur-Mensch), Adam, the man.

> What is man as such if not the spirit of the earth itself, the knowledge of the earth in its eternal being and in its constantly changing becoming?[31]

Man as such is both nature and change, both knowledge and truth. In Christ both change and eternal being are harmoniously united. This is the meaning of the doctrine of the two natures, human and divine, which are united in Christ in his birth. Just as the fall of man consists in his clinging to change, so salvation is for him a clinging to the eternal, but

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[30] Ibid., pp. 125-126; "Was wir sonach feiern ist nichts anderes als wir selbst, wie wir insgesamt sind, oder die menschliche Natur, oder wie ihr es sonst nennen wollt, angesehen und erkannt aus dem goettlichen Prinzip."

[31] Ibid., p. 126; "Was ist der Mensch an sich anders, als der Erdgeist selbst, das Erkennen der Erde in seinem Sein und in seinem immer wechselnden Werden."

not to the eternal which is confined to abstract ideas beyond the realm of existence, rather to the eternal which is present in, although beyond change.

> Namely where that unitedness of eternal being and becoming of the spirit of the earth arises in [man] himself so that he views and loves all becoming and himself only as contained in eternal being. . .[32]

Within mankind the unitedness of being and becoming will always remain, for in mankind man as such always is and becomes. The concept of mankind as macrocosm and the individual as microcosm - a concept not without analogy to Plato's relation between the soul and the society in the state - makes it possible for Schleiermacher to identify true knowledge of man's nature with the vision of mankind in its totality. Thus it is almost the same when Eduard says that Christ is man as such, or that mankind in its entirety is man as such. To know and love Christ is to know and love mankind in its totality and both is to know and love eternal being, manifest in becoming.

> Only when the individual views and edifies mankind as a living community of all individuals, when the individual has within himself the spirit and the consciousness of mankind, when he loses his separated existence to mankind and finds it therein again, only then does he possess the higher life

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[32] Ibid., p. 127: "Darin naemlich, dass eben jene Einerleiheit des ewigen Seins und Werdens des Erdgeistes in ihm selbst aufgeht, dass er alles Werden und auch sich selbst nur in dem ewigen Sein betrachtet und liebt. . ."

and the peace of God.[33]

These identifications of Christ with man as such and of mankind in its totality with man as such make it possible for Eduard to find answers to the questions of the meaning of Christmas and of the nature of truth and its knowability jointly. Furthermore the answer to the question dealing with the relation of Christ to the Church and of the Church to the world is found.

> The community in which man as such is presented or recreated is the Church.[34]

Within the Church one is conscious of the nature of man and of mankind. The Church is related to everything without and around her as the selfconsciousness in the individual is related to unconsciousness. "Each one who has within himself this selfconsciousness comes to the Church."[35] We shall discuss below Schleiermacher's concept of feeling as the center of his dialectics. At this time, it is important to note that "selfconsciousness" - he uses this term synonymously with "feeling" - is not selfconsciousness of the autonomous man. Eduard devel-

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[33] Ibid., p. 128: "Nur wenn der einzelne die Menschheit als eine lebendige Gemeinschaft der einzelnen anschaut und erbaut, ihren Geist und Bewusstsein in sich traegt, und in ihr das abgesonderte Dasein verliert und wiederfindet, nur dann hat er das hoehere Leben und den Frieden Gottes in sich."

[34] Loc. cit.

[35] Loc. cit.

ops his view of salvation, i.e., of arriving at true self-consciousness in strict opposition to Leonhard. Leonhard is the one who clings "to the formations of the earth," who is confined to the realm of opposites and of becoming. Schleiermacher at no place says explicitly that Leonhard is to represent Kantian criticism, yet the very way in which Leonhard develops his arguments, reminds one strongly of the way in which religion is discussed in a Kantian frame of reference. In one of his letters Schleiermacher calls Leonhard's speech "frivolous."[36] The difference between autonomous selfconsciousness and Schleiermacher's selfconsciousness is that difference which we have characterized above. His selfconsciousness is Socratic in so far as the self is truly conscious of itself where it is aware of its being a part of ontic structures which transcend the self. Selfconsciousness does not precede philosophical discourse as the basis on which the discourse rests. Selfconsciousness is rather the result of the discourse, while the discourse itself is the dialectic ascent to the highest knowledge, a "losing of the separated existence," i.e., of sovereign autonomy of the individual in mankind and a receiving of its existence back from mankind. If "mankind in its entirety" stands for "man as such" or for the meaning of Christ's incarnation which in turn stands for the idea of man, then

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[36]Schleiermacher, Briefe, II, 50.

"losing oneself in mankind" and "finding oneself again therein" stand for the gaining of true knowledge of the essential nature of man. The "losing" is the giving up of separated existence which is confined to change, in favor of true knowledge which is beyond the realm of opposites; this is the dialectic ascent. The "finding" is the return into the realm of opposites, yet no longer as being lost between the opposites but as having that higher knowledge which discerns meaningful order within change; this is the vision of reality which Plato puts forth in the Statesman.

There can be no doubt that Schleiermacher understands the Platonic idea not as subjective thought. The ideas have an objective existence within reality. The second speech had developed an approach which comes close to subjective idealism. It had attempted to base the necessity for Christ upon the necessity to think Christ. Schleiermacher employs the same arguments against this approach which has been noted above.[37] If Christ as the true idea of man were merely within subjective thought, then "the children to whom it is revealed" could not participate in faith. Yet true selfconsciousness may be present in immediate awareness (Empfindung), and it is not necessary that it also be present in cognition. Thus, even though those who have true science are necessarily within the Church,[38]

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[37] See above, pp. 11 ff.

[38] See above, p. 117.

one can be in the Church without having science. "This is the case with women."[39]

This immediate awareness is possible because in Christ the true nature of all men is present. All men participate in that true nature.

> The father and the brethren live unitedly in him and are one with him, devotion and love is their essence. Therefore each mother sees Christ in her child. . . . Each of us sees in the birth of Christ his own higher birth through which from now on nothing lives within us except devotion and love. In each one the eternal son of God appears.[40]

Thus Eduard affirms what the women had put forth in their stories and what they in their way had felt as the participation of the idea in the real.

The most important element of the Weihnachtsfeier seems to be the fact that Schleiermacher's analysis centers around the problem of becoming and being, and that this problem is undoubtedly treated in terms of Platonic dialectics. The problem of knowledge is solved by drawing a distinction between opinion as dealing with mere opposites and change on the one hand and knowledge which participates in truth, i.e., in the essential unitedness of being and becoming, on the other hand.

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[39] Schleiermacher, Weihnachtsfeier, p. 129.

[40] Ibid., pp. 130-131: "Der Vater und die Brueder wohnen gleichmaessig in ihm, und sind eins in ihm, Andacht und Liebe sind sein Wesen. Darum sieht jede Mutter. . . Christum in ihrem Kinde. . . . Und ebenso jeder von uns schaut in der Geburt Christi seine eigene hoehere Geburt an, durch die nun auch nichts anderes in ihm lebt, als Andacht und Liebe, und auch in ihm der ewige Sohn Gottes erscheint."

Knowledge of truth and devotion for Christ are practically identified in so far as the unitedness of being and becoming is ultimately present in Christ. Thus the Weihnachtsfeier is a first courageous attempt in which Schleiermacher strives to give systematic form to his program of the contract between science and religion. Although the identification of the true nature of man with Christ had become highly suspicious meanwhile - and was under suspicion even in Schleiermacher's days - it must be pointed out that what Schleiermacher calls science is in itself something that is beyond the secular concept of this entity. The science of which Schleiermacher speaks is religious in character.

Schleiermacher himself must have been aware of the problematic character of this dialogue. Also - which is rather significant - he never wrote another dialogue. The inspiration which moved him to write this little work[41] did not return. The Weihnachtsfeier stands as a noteworthy monument in the development of his thought. The tensions within it had not been counted as weakness but rather as strength. Schleiermacher had the courage to be consistent. He was not afraid of being called a heretic, a virtue for which he praises Plato in the introduction to the Parmenides.[42] Yet he realized that

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[41] Schleiermacher, Briefe, IV, 122.

[42] See above, p. 80.

he himself was not ready to write about and develop his views in the direct form of dialogues. Although he had gained much insight into the nature of Plato's philosophy and form or writing, Schleiermacher had not yet appropriated this form to himself.[43] Thus he set to work on a scrutinizing reflection on the nature of the true dialogue, on the nature of thinking and knowing which makes the dialogue possible and necessary. Reflection on these problems occupied him to the end of his life, and they were put forth explicitly in his lectures on hermeneutics and dialectics just as much as they form the implicit principles of his ethics and systematic theology.

B. Schleiermacher's hermeneutics

Schleiermacher lectures on hermeneutics beginning with the year 1805. There are several manuscripts from the years 1805, 1809, and 1819. Beginning with 1819 he seems to have given his lectures a new outline which he developed and changed subsequently. We also have documents from this period. He continued lecturing on the subject until the end of his life. Unfortunately we have no truly critical edition of his hermeneutics. He did not publish the lectures. Friedrich Luecke published Schleiermacher's own notes together with notes taken down by some of his students. It is difficult, however, to gain an insight into his theory of hermeneutics from this edi-

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[43] Ibid., II, 50.

tion, since it does not pretend to present these hermeneutics in a consistent systematic form. Fortunately, however, we have the text of two lectures "Concerning the Concept of Hermeneutics" which were delivered before the academy of sciences in Berlin; these lectures, relatively late (1829), contain his theory in outline and thus present us with the principles he considered to be basic.[44]

His hermeneutics is related to Plato in a double way. For one thing, he had learned the art of interpretation from his work on Plato; and furthermore his theory of the art of interpretation is based on those principles which we have presented as Socratic dialectics.

Hermeneutics is necessary wherever one does not understand. The task of hermeneutics is given wherever

> the expression of thought through language contains something foreign for the listener; only through the theory [of hermeneutics] can the problem be solved. This, however, is possible only where there is also something in common between the speaker and the listener.[45]

This general definition of hermeneutics as the theory of the art of interpretation contains within itself all the necessary

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[44]Schleiermacher, "Ueber den Begriff der Hermeneutik," Werke, Part III, III, 344-386.

[45]Ibid., 350: "...ueberall wo es im Ausdruck der Gedanken durch die Rede fuer einen Vernehmenden etwas fremdes giebt, da sei eine Aufgabe, die er nur mit Hilfe unserer Theorie loesen koenne; wiewohl freilich immer nur, sofern es zwischen ihm und dem redenden auch schon etwas gemeinsames giebt."

elements that constitute true dialogue. A dialogue is always present when an individual presents something creative which can be understood by the other only in a new creative act. Elements of unity and difference connect the speaker and the listener, the author and the reader. Without the element of difference there is no dialogue and no creative process; conversation in this case would be mere mechanical transmission of information.[46] Without the element of unity, i.e., of sameness, understanding is impossible per se. Thus it is the task of hermeneutics to discover the general rules according to which understanding comes about. As such, hermeneutics is a theory of that art which interprets. Schleiermacher had interpreted Plato by using these rules. He had acted as an artist. Now he is concerned to discover the principles which are at work in this art.

Since hermeneutics is concerned with understanding, i.e., with appropriation of someone else's thought, it is only natural that it must be developed in conjunction with dialectics. Hermeneutics is devoted to analyzing the process of understanding of thought; dialectics is devoted to analyzing the process of creation of thought. Thus hermeneutics can become truly scientific only when dialectics has also grown into a true science.

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[46] Ibid., 345.

> A theory of the art [of interpretation]. . .can be developed fully only when language, the objectification of the creation of thought, is fully understood as a function of the individual life in its relation to the essence of thinking, so that the manner in which the correlation and communication of thought comes about and the manner in which one must understand, can be presented within the same context.[47]

In every dialogue the partners have something in common, and that something is the essence of communication; yet there is also something in each dialogue which differentiates the partners from each other and that is the individuality in which each of them combines his thoughts. Thus hermeneutics has to strive after a definition of what is essential to communication and of what is individual, a task which can be fulfilled only when dialectics does the same for the creation of thought.

The very fact that there are various concepts of hermeneutics shows that there is not yet a true hermeneutics; for otherwise one could reach easily an agreement about one's misunderstandings in this matter.

> As they [these differences in the concept of hermeneutics] have their reason in the yet chaotic condition of this discipline, so they will not disappear until - but then they shall disappear for sure - hermeneutics has reached its form as theory

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[47] Ibid., 366: "Eine Kunstlehre aber kann wol, wie fast von selbst aus dem gesagten hervorzugehen scheint, nur dann erst entstehen, wenn sowol die Sprache in ihrer Objectivitaet als der Prozess der Gedankenerzeugung als Funktion des geistigen Einzellebens in ihrem Verhaeltnis zum Wesen des Denkens selbst so vollkommen durchschaut sind, dass aus der Art, wie beim Verknuepfen und Mittheilen der Gedanken verfahren wird, auch die Art, wie beim Verstehen verfahren werden muss, in einem vollstaendigen Zusammenhang dargestellt werden kann."

> of art: when it takes off from the simple fact of understanding, developing its principles from the nature of language and from the basic conditions for the relation between the speaker and the listener into one rounded system.[48]

This concept of hermeneutics is Socratic. The contradictory opinions about understanding show that the truth of understanding has not yet been discovered. This does not lead to scepticism, for understanding is a given fact: we do understand. Misunderstanding would not be possible if there were not true understanding. Thus Schleiermacher feels justified in seeking that truth, although he is conscious of the fact that this truth has to be found in dialectic manner. All his hermeneutics are still in the dialectical ascent. A science of hermeneutics cannot yet be developed epideictically, since we do not yet have enough knowledge. It will be a truly positive science when it can be combined with dialectics, i.e., when both hermeneutics and dialectics have grown to a fully rounded theory of the art of communication and of thinking, and when thus both these sciences find their fulfilment in each other. Therefore his hermeneutics is mostly an evaluation of what actually goes on in interpretation. It is more a conscious reflection of

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[48] Ibid., 386: "Wie sie nun ihren Grund in dem immer noch chaotischen Zustand dieser Disciplin haben, so werden sie auch nicht eher, aber dann gewiss, verschwinden, wenn die Hermeneutik zu der ihr als Kunstlehre gebuehrenden Gestalt gelangt, und von der einfachen Thatsache des Verstehens ausgehend aus der Natur der Sprache und aus den Grundbedingungen des Verhaeltnisses zwischen dem redenden und dem vernehmenden ihre Regeln in geschlossenem Zusammenhang entwikkelt werden."

what he does, for example, in his interpretation of Plato, rather than the definition of a science, based upon higher principles. These higher principles will be reached at some time. Now, however, we can only strive to unify the many opposites and contradictions which we cannot yet see in their essential unity. This evaluation of the factually given process of understanding, however, can be made with a purpose, with a conscious direction toward a fully grown science, since it is taken within the context of Socratic not-knowing and knowing. The dilemma in which Schleiermacher finds himself is but the assurance that truth has been envisaged.

We shall see later how he thinks of dialectics in the same terms. At this time we may note that this Socratic awareness of ignorance (an ignorance which presupposes knowledge) is an element which can be found in most of his writings. It is that which differentiates him so greatly from the "closed" systems of his time. His writings remain in the tension of the "yes-but." Much of what has been accredited to him as inconsequent eclecticism is nothing but an expression of his spiritual strength with which he leaves everything in its own right. He prefers to accept contradiction rather than to seek a premature systematization; and in his terms all positive systems must be premature systematizations since we as human finite beings have not yet arrived at a positive knowledge of the highest being.

What, then, are the hermeneutic counsels which Schleiermacher gives? (His hermeneutics contain counsels, rather than rules, for rules cannot be laid down before the science has been completed.) First of all: what is the problem which he advises his students to tackle hermeneutically?

The problem of understanding something spoken or written is that of knowing the detail in the light of the whole. This is possible only where the whole is known first, but the whole cannot be known before the details are known.[49] We have seen how Schleiermacher acknowledges and overcomes this problem in his interpretation of Plato.

If this problem were one of mere logic then it could not be solved, just as Zeno cannot come to terms with the problem of change. Yet it is not only a problem of mere logic but of many other capacities of man. Man also is capable of divination and of comparison. These two modes of apprehending something spoken and written, namely the divinatory and the comparative modes, must interpenetrate each other.[50] Children do not know anything to start with, at least they have not the slightest notion of what words mean. (Thinking and speaking are inseparable; thinking is always an inner speaking. "The spoken word is the manner of thought to be actual."[51]) How

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[49] Ibid., 366.

[50] Loc. cit.

[51] Ibid., Part I, VII, 11.

then do children begin to understand when they have nothing to compare? This is all the more a basic question, since "if viewed in daylight, we are at each instance of not understanding in the same situation as they, only for us it is on a smaller scale."[52] The uncertainty with which one is faced if something cannot be understood is overcome

> through the same divinatory act of courage [with which children enter the world of thought and language]. Our present condition cannot be simply separated from the gigantic beginning of childhood; rather the business of understanding and of interpretation is a steadily growing and slowly emerging unit; in the further progress of the development we give support to each other, in so far as we supply to others points for comparison and analogy, yet at each point we begin in the same anticipating manner [in which children begin].[53]

As one grows older one grows also more calm and one spends more time for the observation of one object or the other. Reflection begins to increase and

> thus one enters that period where hermeneutic experience is gathered and where counsels for hermeneutics - for I prefer to say so instead of "rules" - are gathered.[54]

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[52] Ibid., Part III, III, 365: "Aber bei Lichte besehen befinden wir uns in jedem Augenblick des Nichtverstehens noch in demselben Falle wie sie, nur der Maaszstab ist kleiner."

[53] Loc. cit.: "...und wir koennen immer nur mit derselben divinatorischen Kuehnheit beginnen. Wir duerfen also unsern gegenwaertigen Zustand nicht schlechtihin jenen riesenhaften Anfaengen der Kindheit entgegensetzen; sondern dieses Geschaeft des Verstehens und Auslegens ist ein staetiges sich allmaehlich entwikkelndes ganze, in dessen weiterem Verlauf wir uns immer gegenseitig unterstuezen, indem jeder den uebrigen Vergleichspunkte und Analogien hergiebt, das aber auf jedem Punkt immer wieder auf diesselbe ahnende Weise beginnt."

[54] Ibid., 365-366: "Nimmt nun aber von jenen ersten Anfaengen die Rapiditaet der Erfolge ab: so wird durch groes-

This passage continues with pointing out that hermeneutics and dialectics have to be developed toward each other.[55]

When Schleiermacher says that at the root of each act of understanding is an act of divinatory courage, then he exhibits most clearly the fruitfulness and the central problem of his approach. It is another formulation of the Socratic beginning of knowledge which is aware of ignorance because it anticipates knowledge of truth. "Divinatory" may be interpreted as "poetic presentiment" of the whole cosmos, a presentiment which arises from the depth of the unconscious. As we shall see later, "feeling" is such a deepest center in which the transcendent ground itself is represented and with it the entirety and the universe in its harmony. Schleiermacher clearly departs from Kantian epistemology since he introduces consideration of those human capacities which are not confined to ratiocination and which yet are inseparably interwoven with rational inquiry. Divination is not merely an emotional quality which may or may not accompany rational thought; rather it is a human faculty which allows one to grasp "in advance" what logic can analyze afterward.

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sere Langsamkeit der Bewegungen und das laengere Verweilen bei einer Operation die Besinnung beguenstigt, und so tritt zuerst ein jene Periode, wo hermeneutische Erfahrungem gesammelt werden, und zu Rathschlaegen, denn so moechte ich lieber sagen als Regeln, gesammelt werden.

[55]Quoted above, p. 133.

This is also the reason why Schleiermacher again and again has pointed out that Plato must be understood as a philosopher and as an artist. In Plato's philosophy he discovered an interpenetration and interaction of divination and rational inquiry which he strove to reappropriate in his own speculations. He therefore gave central positions to self-activity and self-consciousness (Selbsttaetigkeit and Selbstbewusstsein). There is a creative element in thinking and in understanding. Communication is not merely a transmittance of information but it is a creative act. The listener must recreate the thoughts of the speaker. Communication is more than a mechanical process.[56] Also in Kant's philosophy the self has a creative center. Yet there is a difference between the two thinkers' understanding of this center. In Kant it is an autonomous self, in Schleiermacher it is dependent. In Kant the universal reason seems to be an hypostatization of the laws of reasoning in the self; in the last analysis the self creates the laws of the world to the extent that it orders the universe according to its forms of intuition and the categories of the mind. In Schleiermacher the center of the self is understood as dependent; self-activity here is viewed as man's reaching out for an understanding of cosmic orders which are objectively given,

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[56]See Schleiermacher's discussion on Leibnitz' idea of a universal philosophical language. Werke, Part III, III, 138 ff.

and self-consciousness is viewed as man's immediate awareness of the existence of and his place within such orders. Kant's "road to the inner" leads him to a self which is ultimately alone with itself. Schleiermacher's "road to the inner" leads the self to ultimate objectivity, because the self participates in objective, ontic structures.

This brief preliminary discussion of what is the subject of our discussion of the Dialektik was necessary in order that we may bring to light the full force of Schleiermacher's consideration of divination as indispensable element for understanding. Anything spoken or written is in itself something like a cosmos. Each element wants to be understood in terms of the whole. Divination makes possible an anticipation of the whole from the knowledge of a detail. The detail does not only contain certain statements which have to be complemented by other statements; apart from its explicit content it also contains implicit principles which pervade the whole, namely the author's mode of connecting thoughts. Divination enters into this inner movement of thought. If one understands the inner movement of an author's thought, one can truly anticipate the whole, since the inner movement is just as revealing as that which he expresses as content of his statements. Thus hermeneutics is not only necessary with regard to writings in a foreign tongue; it is not even restricted to the written

word alone, but it covers everything which is an utterance of thought, written or spoken.[57] It is even necessary to reappropriate what has been written down by oneself at some earlier period.[58] This is also the reason why Plato in his dialogues starts from the very beginning each time, even if these dialogues were written only for himself and for the close circle of the academy.

> For even if we look only to the immediate purpose, that writing, as regarded himself and his followers was only a means to remember the thoughts already current among them, then Plato considers thinking so much as a creative act that for him the memory of something that has been obtained as a result must also include the manner in which the result had originally been obtained.[59]

The hermeneutic process is at work every time we try to understand more than the merely obvious, more than mere information.

> Very often I catch myself in the midst of hermeneutic operations during the course of intimate conversation when I am not content with the usual degree of understanding but when I try to find out how the transition from one thought to another has come about within the friend's mind or when I seek to discover what views, what judgments and intentions are the reason why he expresses himself with regard to a certain object in this manner and not in another.[60]

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[57] Ibid., Part III, III, 351.

[58] Schleiermacher, "Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens," Werke, Part III, II, 208.

[59] Schleiermacher, Platon, I, 19 (16).

[60] Schleiermacher, Werke, Part III, III, 351: "Ich ergreife mich sehr oft mitten im vertraulichen Gespraech auf hermeneutischen Operationen, wenn ich mich mit einem gewoehnlichen Grade des Verstehens nicht begnuege, sondern zu erforschen suche,

In other words, creative understanding seeks to understand the creative movement within that which is to be understood. We might say tentatively and cautiously that Schleiermacher's hermeneutics strives to bring to light the transcendental conditions and processes of understanding. The term "transcendental" must be introduced with reservations, since it is so easily identified with Kant's use of the term. We shall see later in what respects Schleiermacher differs at this point from Kant. So far we can only say that "transcendental" means as much as "inner," namely that which is not empirically given but which is nonetheless presented in experiences, if only one is alert enough to discover it.

The art of hermeneutics is that of "guessing an author's inner manner of combination."[61]

> In matters of this kind one's own conviction can be quite certain, and it is not difficult to communicate it to friends who operate in similar manner. Yet it would be fruitless to give one's presentation the form of a demonstration. This does not mean anything derogatory with regard to one's discovery; in the field of hermeneutics the otherwise paradoxical word. . .is true, namely that assertion is more than demonstration.[62]

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wie sich wohl in dem Freunde der Uebergang von einem Gedanken zum andern gemacht habe, oder wenn ich nachspuere, mit welchen Ansichten und Urtheilen und Bestrebungen es wohl zusammenhaengt, dass er sich ueber einen besprochenen Gegenstand gerade so und nicht anders ausdruekkt."

[61] Ibid., 354.

[62] Loc. cit: "In Dingen dieser Art aber kann die eigene Ueberzeugung sehr fest sein und auch gleichgestimmten und analog operierenden Genossen sehr leicht mittheilbar; aber die Form einer Demonstration wuerde man der Darlegung vergeblich aufzupraegen suchen. Und dies ist keineswegs zum Nachtheil einer

Since hermeneutics is still more guesswork than scientific demonstration, one can only state what one has discovered. Schleiermacher's interpretation of Plato is the best example of what he means with this statement. At the same time it is a commentary on his view of the state in which the science of hermeneutics existed at his time. It had not yet reached a truly scientific form and thus it could not do more than give counsels (rather than rules) for the art of interpretation. All of this is necessary because of the nature of the object. A thinker is an individual, and an individual's unique mode of thinking cannot be forced into the strait-jacket of general rules. There is no other way of entering into "the inner manner of combination" of an author than by bold adventure.

The statement that assertion is more than demonstration may, of course, be misunderstood as meaning that the door is opened to arbitrary interpretation. Yet this would be in contrast to Schleiermacher's concern with methodological procedure. As we shall see presently, he is concerned with the development of methods that assure accurate results. One may understand his insistence on methodical inquiry and on the preliminary character of all method if one keeps in mind that method for him is something which grows out of the actual con-

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solchen Entdeckung gesagt, sondern auf dem Gebiete gilt wol vorzueglich das sonst ziemlich paradoxe Wort. . .dass Behaupten weit mehr ist als Beweisen."

cern with the object. "Method" for him retains the meaning of met-hodos as used and understood by the classical Greek philosophers. Aristotle, for example, in the first lines of his Poetics says that he shall treat of the structure of the plot, of the number and nature of the parts of which a good work of poetry is composed and also of "whatever else is on the met-hodos." The met-hodos retains the meaning of "road." There is a certain object to which a certain road will probably lead and one does not know in advance whatever else one may encounter. To use the right method is to some extent a matter of luck. One has a certain presentiment of the nature of the object and this presentiment suggests a certain method; yet only after one has traveled the road can one be sure whether it was the right path or not. Demonstration will be possible when a method has been discovered that is truly congruous to the object. As long, however, as no absolute method has been developed, one is forced to "assert" rather than to "demonstrate," but this very assertion, although it is the outcome of a "personal acquaintance" with the object wants to be verified by a more and more adequate methodical (i.e., scientific) inquiry.

In the case of hermeneutics one is concerned with finding a method that leads to the understanding of someone else's thought. In actual interpretation this understanding is presupposed as "personal acquaintance," so to speak. Hermeneutics, as the theory of interpretation, is to give advice on how such

an acquaintance can become subject to method, i.e., how it can be elevated above the merely subjective realm of the individual interpreter. The individual interpreter acts as an artist; hermeneutics has to find out the rules which are implicit in the artist's work.

Since, according to Schleiermacher's view, no one method has yet been developed which could encompass all that which goes on in actual interpretation, one has to see how the different methods can be understood as complementing each other. It seems to him that there are mainly two ways of approaching someone else's thought, and he subdivides his hermeneutics into two corresponding sections. One is what he calls the psychological method and the other is the grammatical method. "Psychological" method does not mean to psychologize a thinker. It means the divinatory reappropriation of the inner movement, of the composition of an author's thought. When Schleiermacher declares the form of the dialogue as the chief criterion for the interpretation of Plato, then he gives an example of what he means by "psychological method." To understand the relation between obvious content and form in the dialogues and to envisage the true content in the indivisible unit of form and obvious content is to reappropriate the inner movement of Plato's thought.[63] This psychological method is accompanied by the grammatical

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[63] Ibid., 360.

method. While the psychological method is more concerned with the flow of thought, the grammatical method is more concerned with comparing the language (language for Schleiermacher is actualized thought) of an author with language as a whole.

The psychological method is necessarily more divinatory in character and the grammatical method is more comparative in character. Yet neither can do without the other. The psychological method also must compare and the grammatical method also must use divination. For the psychological method cannot understand the inner meaning of separated elements if it does not gain knowledge about them by comparison with others and the grammatical method cannot compare meaningfully if it is not aware of the context in which the elements stand which it wants to compare. If each method were perfected, then they would eliminate each other since they would each completely include the other and merge into one. So far the masters in both methods have to assist each other.[64] If one seeks to approach understanding merely in psychological manner, using only one's divination without comparing, then one is a victim of nebulous phantasy. Someone who thinks that he can just compare what on the face of it seems to be the same is a pedant.

> Complete understanding is conditioned by the efforts of both [psychological-divinatory and grammatical-com-

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[64] Ibid., 363.

> paring methods]; there can be no interpreter of either kind who stands so much on one side that he cannot also appreciate that which is done on the other side. An interpreter of the latter kind [psychological-divinatory] who wants to fumble over the linguistic aspects. . .could be nothing but a nebulizer. The other one, however [grammatical-comparing], acting the same way, must be what is called a pedant, for he would not have the ability to see the whole man in a work and to live with him, even though he may be able to find out many things about the relation of a work to others of its kind. . .[65]

Hermeneutics is a discipline which "needs bright light."[66] Thus all phantasy has to be banned from this science in order that it may not end in "fog and arbitrary talk."[67] On the other hand, hermeneutics is not a matter of mathematics. It is concerned with life and thus it must be executed with divination, with understanding insight that has constantly in mind the empirically given and yet comes to an inner understanding of the empirically given by supplying what is within and beyond the empirically given. We have seen in our discussion of Schleiermacher's interpretation of the Phaedrus how he moves from the external to something internal, how this internal turns again

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[65] Ibid., 376: "Das vollkommene Verstehen bleibt immer durch die Bemuehungen beider bedingt, und es kann in keinem einzelnen Ausleger sein, der so ganz auf der einen Seite staende, dass ihm auch die Empfaenglichkeit fuer das was auf der andern geschieht abgeht. Ein Ausleger von der letzten Art, der ueber das Sprachliche hinpfuschen wollte. . .koennte auf unserem Gebiet nur sein, was man. . .einen Nebulisten genannt hat. Der andere aber, ebenso gedacht, wenn er auch in der That die Verhaeltnisse eines Werkes zu den uebrigen seiner Gattung auf das richtigste ausmittelte, so dass er. . .die Bedeutung desselben tiefsinnig auffasste, wuerde dennoch, weil er in dem Werk nicht den ganzen Menschen zu sehen und mit ihm zu leben wuesste, sondern dafuer ihm die Faehigkeit gaenzlich fehlte, dem nicht entgehen, was wir einen Pedanten nennen."

[66] Ibid., 381.

[67] Loc. cit.

into something external and so on, until finally the innermost soul of the dialogue has been revealed which now gives meaning and unity to what, empirically speaking, are meaningless opposites.[68]

His hermeneutics is an example of what has been characterized above as "science filled with eros."[69] On the one hand, he is greatly concerned with strict methodology; on the other hand, this very methodology must include those elements which elude assertive statement and which, therefore, can never be immediately the object of statistical registration. Interpretation must be carried on both with eros and with ratio. On the one hand he who seeks to understand must embrace his object passionately and must seek to become one with it, and on the other hand he must discipline himself to reserve the cool distance of comparative observation of the object. And both distance and union must interpenetrate each other.

Schleiermacher's method of interpretation presupposes a reverend anticipation of the own creative life of a person, of the free movement of thought. But it also presupposes a certain essential structure of thought, for otherwise understanding were impossible per se. While hermeneutics, in conjunction

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[68]See above, p. 71.

[69]See above, p. 144.

with dialectics, is to develop a method which brings to light the essential structure of thought which is common to everyone, it must also leave room for the individual's particular mode of thinking and must strive to discover in each instance the relation between the general and the particular. It is necessary to understand a document as "a series of thoughts and at the same time as the breaking forth of a moment of life which is an act infinitely connected with many other acts of different kinds."[70]

Understanding itself is a creative act which - since it has life of its own - guarantees the life of that which is to be understood. At every instance of hermeneutics, whether practiced or whether developed as theory of this practice, one is therefore faced with that other question: What is the nature of thinking? How is knowledge gained? This question points to the twin science of hermeneutics, namely to dialectics. Dialectics receives its impulses from hermeneutics as systematic theology receives its impulses from practical theology and both, hermeneutics and dialectics, are rooted in the actuality of knowing and communicating knowledge, just as both systematic theology and practical theology are rooted in the actuality of the faith of the Church.

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[70]Schleiermacher, "Ueber den Begriff der Hermeneutik," Werke, Part III, III, 352-353: "...eine Reihe von Gedanken zugleich als einen hervorbrechenden Lebensmoment, als eine mit vielen anderen auch anderer Art zusammenhaengende That zu verstehen."

CHAPTER IV

SCHLEIERMACHER'S DIALECTICS

A. Dialectics as theory of the art of the dialogue

Schleiermacher's dialectics has finally been published in readable form. Rudolf Odebrecht, who had evidently been working on this project as early as 1933 (since he refers to it in an article of that date), published the work during the war in 1942. Unfortunately the publishing house is located at Leipzig in the Eastern Zone, and for the present there seems to be little hope that the book will enjoy the circulation which it deserves. The edition which Odebrecht has prepared is invaluable. It is excellently arranged; it uses as its text one of the complete student copies of the lectures; it offers in the form of footnotes Schleiermacher's own notes from the same year; it makes accessible much other material in an appendix; it provides the whole work with an excellent index; what is most important, it is done with a critical understanding of Schleiermacher's work as a whole. Odebrecht chose the lectures of 1822 for the text, because "the year 1822 brings the decisive turn" in Schleiermacher's concept of dialectics.[1] He had lectured on the subject first in Berlin in 1811, again in 1818 and in 1822. Odebrecht chose the lectures of 1822 because in

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[1]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. xxi.

this year the nature of the dialogue became the dominating principle for the structure of dialectics. This principle had been only in germ before, but now it had become fully developed.[2] Schleiermacher lectured again on dialectics in 1828 and in 1831, but there is not much development after 1822; it is even doubtful whether the later lectures are as powerful as the lectures of 1822. In addition to that we do not have good transcripts of the later lectures.

Schleiermacher himself wanted to publish his dialectics. He got as far as to prepare the introduction which was ready for print at the time of his death. This introduction, probably written between 1831 and 1832, is printed at the beginning of Odebrecht's edition. In unmistakable terms it introduces dialectics as theory of the art of the dialogue. In November, 1833, Schleiermacher returned from a trip to Sweden, Norway and Denmark. He felt in excellent health and wanted to carry out "quite some literary work; but it seems that it cannot be attended to right away."[3] In February, 1834, he fell ill and had to discontinue his lectures. He wrote to Jonas:

> As is natural, I have used my free time to counsel with myself and I have decided to choose a quite new route. As you know I wanted to give to my dialectics and my Christian morals a form similar to that of the

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[2] Loc. cit.

[3] Schleiermacher, Briefe, II, 508.

> dogmatics. This I have given up, however. I shall hurry to give them a form something like the encyclopedia [Kurze Darstellung...]. In that case these matters can perhaps be finished; otherwise it is highly improbable.[4]

This communication was made on February 4th. Schleiermacher died on February 12th.

If his dialectics is truly Platonic, then it must exhibit that universality which he discovered in Plato's dialectics. It must not take its point of departure from any particular dogma concerning the nature of man and the knowledge of truth; no one system of philosophy can claim to have formulated ultimate knowledge. Rather it must itself begin within the realm of opposites. In other words, it must itself enter into the dialogue which goes on among the various points of view which are posed by one philosopher and opposed by another. It must ask for the universal principles which underly all thought, regardless of the particular point of view which is defended by various thinkers; it must also ask for the ultimate goal to which all thought is directed. Thus it must ascend from the realm of contradictions to the highest principles and "in return" it must provide the nuclei for the various positive sciences. Like in Plato, dialectics must be at the center

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[4]Unpublished; reprinted in Bernhard Weiss, "Untersuchungen ueber Schleiermacher's Dialektik," Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie und philosophische Kritik, LXXIII (1878), 13; also reprinted in Appendix I to Odebrecht's edition of the Dialektik, p. 467.

of all inquiry, which means in Schleiermacher's case that his Dialektik must contain those principles which underly his entire work; in other words, his "program" of the "contract" must find its ultimate justification and formulation in the Dialektik.

For the rest of this chapter we shall deal with Schleiermacher's dialectics mainly in expository fashion. We shall follow the development which he gave to his dialectics. Reference to Plato will be made only in so far as it is essential to point out how Schleiermacher's dialectics retains the character of the dialogue. It is in the concluding chapter that we can discuss the relation to Plato in more essential terms, for only after we have arrived at the center can this discussion become fruitful; there we shall discuss the inner unity between that which is at the center of Schleiermacher's and of Plato's thought and we shall also treat of the consequences for the positive sciences.

We may well begin our inquiry by asking whether or not Schleiermacher incorporated in his lectures explicit remarks concerning the importance of Plato for dialectics. In accordance with the custom of his time he mentions the names of other philosophers only rarely. Only nine names appear. They are Fludd (once), Heraclitus (once), Hegel (once), Spinoza (once), Christian Wolff (once), Jakob Boehme (twice), Leibniz (twice), Kant (three times), and finally Plato (eight times). Except

for Plato, all names are either mentioned casually or for the illustration of some point. Spinoza, Kant and Hegel are criticized with the purpose of drawing the limits between their philosophies and Schleiermacher's own thought. Plato, however, is always mentioned as being at the basis of what he himself develops. Plato is invoked as a witness for the genuineness of the dialectics which Schleiermacher unfolds. Especially interesting is one passage which ends his discussion of the syllogism. He holds that the syllogism does not really help any in the gaining of knowledge, since the conclusion is contained in the premises. Only if one is confronted by someone who wants to deceive is the syllogism helpful, for it facilitates the discovery of error. How then is it possible, he asks, that so much emphasis has been put on the syllogistic method? This must be understood historically:

> Had there been no sophists and rhetors then one would have never had Aristotelian logic; one would have retained Platonic logic which knows only λόγος and ῥῆμα (concept and judgment) and which still considered dialectics as that art which connects and separates concepts according to nature.[5]

He goes on to say that we should forget about the Sophists and about the disputations of the middle ages and should rather seek

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[5]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 436: "Haette es keine Sophisten und Rhetoren gegeben, so haetten wir keine aristotelische Logik bekommen, sondern waeren bei der platonischen geblieben, die nur λόγος und ῥῆμα (Begriff und Urteil) hat, und die die Dialektik noch als Kunst, Begriffe richtig zu teilen und zu verknuepfen, ansah."

a way of gaining knowledge and agreement.

> And thus one may consider it to be the proper time to do away with a matter which now can only hurt [i.e., with the syllogistic method for development of philosophy] in as far as it detracts from that which is essential, in order that one may win room for the discussion of immediate formation of concepts and judgments.[6]

Aristotelian logic was valuable in the defense against the sophists and the rhetors. It has never helped in the gaining of knowledge itself. Thus we must return to Plato himself.

Though Schleiermacher refers to him more than to other thinkers, explicit references to Plato are also rare nevertheless; these references, however, appear indeed at crucial points in his Dialektik and they are of such outspoken importance that they indicate at least his intention to reappropriate Plato's concern. If he did not mention Plato more often explicitly, it is because he considered it improper to interrupt the systematic development with historic references. There is a notation on one of the sheets which contain his first drafts for his lectures. He mentions there that the historic elements should be brought in very casually and subordinately; reference is to be made to Plato and Aristotle "possibly without mentioning the

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[6] Loc.cit.: "Und so duerfte es an der Zeit sein, sich einer Sache, die jetzt nur noch schadet, indem sie das Wesentliche vernachlaessigen laesst, zu entledigen, damit man Raum gewinne, die direkte Begriffs- und Urteilsbildung besser zu behandeln."

names."[7]

If we now ask what the general definitions are which he gives for dialectics, then we find that he has two formulae which actually are one and the same. On the one hand he calls dialectics "the presentation of the basic principles of the dialogue" and on the other hand he says that dialectics is the discipline which develops the principles with which the strife in thinking can be brought to an end.

Both these formulae are the same because the dialogue - Schleiermacher calls it "skillful conversation in the field of pure thinking" - is at the same time the condition of true strife. The interpretation of these formulae shows Schleiermacher's Socratic basis. He finds himself in a situation in which many voices make themselves heard and yet there is no full accord between the different opinions. Thus one cannot say that full truth rests with any single thinker, i.e., with any single partner of the dialogue. Yet, since there is something like understanding even between people who hold divergent views, there must be something like knowledge which is above the opposites in which the different systems of thought are caught, and at the same time there must be some general principles for conversation which make it possible to reach understanding in spite of the differences. It is the task of dialectics to point

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[7] Ibid., Appendix I, pp. 480-481.

out the existence of a highest truth and knowledge and to point out the general principles which have to be applied to the dialogue if it is to be directed toward ultimate agreement. Therefore it is one and the same when he says that dialectics gives the basic principles for the dialogue and when he says that dialectics is a theory of the art to end strife.

A more detailed discussion of Schleiermacher's terms is called for.

> Dialectics is the presentation of the basic principles for the skillful conversation in the field of pure thinking.[8]

Schleiermacher's use of the term "pure thinking" must not be confused with what Hegel means by the same term. Schleiermacher differentiates three kinds of thinking. One he calls "practical thinking" (geschaeftliches Denken); this is thinking directed toward some particular problem which is to be solved. Another kind of thinking is "genuinely artful thinking" (kuenstlerisches Denken); this kind of thinking is concerned with appreciation of and giving fullness to a certain situation, a period or so on. The third kind of thinking, finally, is "pure thinking." The Parmenides is a true example of pure thinking in as far as that dialogue is not concerned with anything but with

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[8] Ibid., p. 5: "Dialektik ist Darlegung der Grundsaetze fuer die kunstmaessige Gespraechsfuehrung im Gebiet des reinen Denkens." We translate "kunstmaessig" as "skillful." The meaning of this term will become clear from the context; it has been the same usage of the term when Schleiermacher characterized Plato as philosopher and artist (Philosoph und Kuenstler). "Kunstmaessig" means as much as "not arbitrary." "Skillful conversation" as used here means that kind of conversation which is not just talk but which is aware of its inner structure at the moment when it takes place.

knowledge itself. Its object is truth as such.[9] The difference between Schleiermacher's and Hegel's concept of pure thinking consists, so much can be said at this time, in that pure thinking is not identified with abstract thinking in Schleiermacher. Pure thinking is not without the other two kinds of thinking. They are all interrelated, as they all have the same origin. There is constant conversation between the three kinds of thinking, and in so far as dialectics tries to confine itself to pure thinking only, it can do so only by trying to keep away from the other two kinds. In other words, pure thinking is not actualized but it is present only as a tendency to strive for undisputable knowledge.[10] The very fact that there are still several concepts of the nature and task of dialectics, i.e., several concepts of the nature of pure thinking, shows that pure thinking has not yet been fully realized.

Yet at the same time there is such a thing as pure thinking, i.e., the tendency to think for no other purpose than for the sake of truth itself. Ever since Socrates and Plato discovered the idea of truth which is beyond opposites, the task of dialectics has been laid down. Yet dialectics cannot produce truth as positive knowledge and it cannot therefore give

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[9]See above, p. 80.

[10]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 6.

absolute rules for the attainment of knowledge. What dialectics can do and must do, is to discover the ultimate reasons why there is dialogue and strife, and it must elevate these reasons into consciousness so that the dialogue can go on as "skillful conversation." We have seen above how the very fact that hermeneutics is in a condition of chaos is at the same time the reason why there must be hermeneutics and that this very situation, if truly understood, helps in the discovery of the general lines along which interpretation has to move so that hermeneutics may emerge as a positive science.[11] In that case it was a question of providing a theory for the art of interpretation. Dialectics is to provide a theory for the art of conversation, i.e., for thinking. (Thinking and speaking are inseparable for Schleiermacher as for Plato, and even the individual's formation of thought is considered an internal dialogue.[12]) If dialectics is to provide the basic principles for skillful conversation, then this means that dialectics is to aid thinking in developing in a manner in which it is conscious of its own nature. This was the fact in Plato, and it was the ultimate reason why he gave his philosophy the form of the dialogue.[13] Plato introduced dialectics as a science and

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[11]See above, p. 133.

[12]See above, p. 136.

[13]See above, pp. 46 ff.

he also thought dialectically, in so far as all his thinking was art.

A closer examination of the formula for dialectics as the art of concluding strife brings the same results and furthers the understanding of Schleiermacher's concept of the dialogue. Wherever we have the desire to know truth and where this desire is shared, there is dialectics; pure thinking has commenced.

> Wherever pure thinking and genuinely artful thinking do not part or where no communication between those who think differently takes place but where instead one has simply the transmission of thoughts from independent thinkers to those who receive, there no dialectics comes to light.[14]

In other words, pure thinking, as soon as it enters the discussion with others, poses and begins to explore the problems of dialectics. There is a creative movement in the teacher and in the pupil, in the speaker and in the listener; and this situation is the situation of strife. Strife could not exist if there were not pure thinking, i.e., the tendency toward indisputable truth; and strife could not exist also if there were no difference. Thus the condition of strife in which the thinker finds himself contains at the same time the elements of ignorance and of knowledge. The situation of strife has come about because thinking has been carried on along unskillful lines. But the

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[14]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 10: "Wo hingegen reines Denken und kuenstlerisches nicht recht auseinander treten, oder auch, wo es zwischen verschiedenen Denkenden keine Denkgemeinschaft gibt, sondern nur die einfache Mitteilung der selbstaendig Denkenden an die Aufnehmenden, da tritt keine Dialektik ans Licht."

situation of strife also means that there is some common knowledge and that there are some common principles for thinking which can become the basis for pure thinking.

> The condition of strife presupposes that there is a thinking which has been created unskillfully and that this thinking can be corrected by the art of strife (dialectics). One is therefore justified in assuming that there will never be any happy result for the dialogue if these two preconditions were not given: a common knowledge and common rules for the combination of thought.[15]

Schleiermacher's view of knowledge as being caught in a situation of strife is a form of the Socratic awareness of ignorance. We would not have differences if we truly knew. Yet this does not lead to scepticism, since strife itself presupposes that there is essential truth and that thinking has essential structures which lead to truth. Dialectics, therefore, if it is a theory of the art of the dialogue (which is but another way of saying that it is a theory of the art to end strife) must seek to discover that ultimate ground which is common knowledge and it must seek to discover those basic principles which are the essential structure of thinking. Whatever ultimate knowledge may be,

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[15] Ibid., p. 96: "Der Zustand des Streites setzt selbst voraus, dass es ein kunstlos entstandenes Denken geben muesse, welches durch Ausuebung der Kunst des Streites berichtigt werden soll. Es ist also gerechtfertigt, zu behaupten, dass, wenn nicht beide Voraussetzungen: ein gemeinsames Wissen und gemeinsame Kombinationsregeln, gegeben sind, kein gluecklicher Erfolg einer Gespraechsfuehrung moeglich ist."

> true elimination of strife occurs only when - within the strife - a common knowledge is found in which both partners participate. . . . Certainty is in the solution only when the knowledge, common to both partners, is not chosen arbitrarily but when it is original, so that he who concedes concedes also that he shall never be able to think differently because the particular knowledge found is intricately connected with the rest of thinking.[16]

Thus dialectics itself cannot take its place at some Archimedian point which is outside the strife, for in so doing it would defeat its own purpose.

> Any other solution which begins at some point in between [ignorance and true knowledge] is only of provisional character.[17]

Dialectics can therefore not agree with those views that "choose arbitrarily." It is premature to say that pure thinking is confined to one of the usual opposites which appears in the discussion between the different schools of thought. These usual opposites, such as cognition and imagination, knowledge and opinion, common point of view and higher point of view, speculation and empiricism, are not ultimate opposites, for in each member of these opposites pure thinking may be contained, just as much as in the other.[18] By the same token it

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[16] Ibid., p. 97: "Es gibt also in jedem Fall nur dann eine wirkliche Loesung des Streites, wenn es in dem Gebiete des Streites ein solches gemeinsames Wissen fuer beide Teile gibt . . . . Also Zuverlaessigkeit in der Aufloesung ist nur, wenn das gemeinsame Wissen nicht aufs Geratewohl zu Hilfe genommen wird, sondern so urspruenglich ist, dass derjenige, der es zugibt, auch zugibt, es koenne nie wieder zurueckgenommen werden, weil dieses Wissen mit dem ganzen uebrigen Denken aufs genauste verbuden ist."

[17] Loc. cit.: "Jede andere Loesung, die von einem dazwischenliegenden Punkte anfaengt, ist immer nur eine provisorische."

[18] Ibid., p. 27.

is erroneous to assume that truth can be found on the basis of some absolute statement.

> We renounce the method of those who have everything developed from some basic core of sentences which is supposed to contain the essential elements of knowledge and from which knowledge must necessarily be developed as from an absolute a priori, whether such basic cores of sentences are called theory of the sciences or logic or metaphysics or philosophy of nature or whatever else. . . . We shall rather have to say that such attempts can be repeated again and again with equal justification and without that the solution to the strife is furthered, although each attempt is undertaken in the hope of ending the strife.[19]

Philosophic systems which establish some mode of thinking or some partial truth as basic may be great works of art, and they may indirectly further the development of dialectics. Yet, as such, they do not contribute to the furthering of pure thinking, since they are, "to put it blandly, brain-waves" which adhere either to the genuinely artful or to the practical kind of thinking.[20] The insistence that dialectics itself must remain within the realm of the dialogue differentiates this dialectics from that of Hegel. Absolute truth as it is in itself

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[19] Ibid., p. 28: "Zweitens aber sagen wir uns ebenso von dem Verfahren aller derer los, welche, indem sie einen Inbegriff von Saetzen aufstellen, der das Wesentliche des Wissens so enthalten soll, dass das weitere sich daraus entwickeln laesst, moegen sie ihn nun Wissenschaftslehre nennen oder Logik oder Metaphysik oder wie sonst immer, hierbei einen sogenannten Grundsatz an die Spitze stellen als denjenigen, mit dem das Wissen notwendig anfange, und der selbst schlechthin angenommen werden muesse. . . . Wir werden vielmehr behaupten muessen, dass solche Versuche sich mit gleichem Recht immer aufs Neue wiederholen koennen, ohne dass die Loesung des Streites dadurch im geringsten weiter gedeiht, wenngleich jeder neue Versuch immer in der bestimmten Hoffnung unternommen wird, dass er allem Streit ein Ende machen werde."

[20] Ibid., p. 29.

is, indeed, what Schleiermacher seeks. Yet he does not identify this kingdom of truth with pure thinking. Pure thinking for him is the tendency toward that truth; it is the longing for the highest but it is not more. Dialectics for him is a clarification of what man seeks, but it does not enshrine the goal itself in the form of a synthesis which is found within dialectics. The synthesis is sought by dialectics but, as we shall see below, it is given to man as a manifestation from "the other side." As in Plato, the good manifests itself to him who is persistent enough to pursue dialectics to its ultimate limits, although the good "lives beyond being" and cannot be "put into words like other mathemata." Thus dialectics remains within the realm of the opposites, i.e., within the realm of existence, although it is constantly directed toward unchanging truth; sapientia clamat in plateis.

There is one more condition to justify the existence of genuine strife. Thinking must be related to being. If this is not so, then no genuine dialogue or strife can take place. Schleiermacher points out that his definition of being agrees with the oldest formulae for being, but he hastens to say that this is not the reason for his view on the question.

> We do not go back to this explanation which has not arisen from our present inquiry. We rather consider that fact that being is objectively given and seek to understand the nature and range of strife in order that we may grow conscious of the fact that the recognition of that condition as being an essential part

> of our task belongs indivisibly and essentially together.[21]

In other words, he refuses to introduce some dogma of being which could be something like an Archimedian point outside the dialogue of dialectics. The condition of strife is the only condition one has to work with. One must show how within this condition objective being is envisaged necessarily. Schleiermacher is always ready to concede his point to scepticism, since he holds that scepticism is an arbitrary and nebulous position which eliminates itself.[22] Yet, just as one discovers the situation of true strife when scepticism is unmasked, so one discovers that true strife presupposes the existence of objective being.

> If we eliminate the relation between thinking and being then there is no strife. As long as thinking remains simply within itself so long there is only difference. Thus the remaining-within-itself of thinking is basic for scepticism which does not relate thinking to being as to something objectively given but which rather tends to draw being into thinking. As soon, however, as we relate thinking to something else which is not thinking in itself, all the conditions of strife are given, for strife needs something identical for either of the conflicting parties, and only with regard to that identical element can one say that the difference in the thinking of the two is unbearable.[23]

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[21] Ibid., p. 21: "Indes gehen wir gar nicht auf diese Erklaerung zurueck, als die uns hier nicht geworden ist, sondern wir bleiben nur bei jener bekannten Tatsache stehen, um dadurch den Streit zu erklaeren und das Gebiet desselben zu bestimmen, und uns bewusst zu werden, dass die Stellung unserer Aufgabe und die Anerkennung jener Tatsache wesentlich zusammengehoeren."

[22] Ibid., p. 111 ff.

[23] Ibid., p. 21: "Denn nehmen wir die Beziehung auf das Seiende weg, so gibt as keinen Streit; sondern solange das Den-

Once in a while one finds the expression "idealism-realism" used to denote Schleiermacher's "epistemology." This expression is not wrong in so far as it does depict his bipolar approach to the problem of knowledge. Yet it does not give a true image of his actual concern. Both idealism and realism are for him two modes of thinking which in themselves are incompetent to penetrate to the level of knowledge and being. His approach is not a mere combination of the two; the only fitting label which one may give to Schleiermacher's approach is "Socratic dialectics." All the principles in his dialectics are derived from the situation of the dialogue in which thinking takes place. Neither idealism nor realism is able to end the strife, just as no system which "chooses arbitrarily" is able to end the strife. All these approaches take their position "at a point in between" ignorance and knowledge. Schleiermacher tends to take no position in between but rather to take the very tension which exists between the two as his "position" if that can be called a "position" at all. This is the reason why he does not begin - even on such an ultimately important

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ken nur rein in sich bleibt, gibt es nur Verschiedenheit. Daher auch dieses Insichbleiben des Denkens der skeptischen Ablehnung zugrunde liegt, und diese zunaechst gegen die Beziehung des Denkens auf das Sein als auf ein anderes vielmehr das Sein mit in das Denken hineinzuziehen sucht. Sobald wir aber das Denken auf Sein als auf ein anderes, das nicht wieder Denken ist, beziehen, so sind alle Bedingungen des Streites gegeben. Denn der Streit erfordert ein Selbiges fuer beide Teile, und nur in Beziehung auf ein solches kann gesagt werden, dass das verschiedene Denken in beiden nicht vertraeglich sei."

question as that of the relation between being and thinking - with some assertive statement; he points out how his view is in accord "with the oldest definitions," but he hastens to show how he bases his own view not on those tradition-honored definitions but rather on the tension of the strife within the dialogue.

The tension of strife in which the dialogue finds itself has three major tasks as consequence. Dialectics is to solve these tasks: (1) the strife must be ended; (2) each fragmentary knowledge must be brought into its proper context with all other knowledge, i.e., "one must learn where it belongs in the total context of knowledge";[24] (3) the construction of all knowledge in its proper context (Zusammenhang).

> And if we have arrived here, then the two first purposes cease to exist, for then no fragmentary knowledge is left and no contradictory imaginations.[25]

In order to carry out these tasks, Schleiermacher divides his dialectics into two major parts. One part he calls "transcendental." This part is concerned with original knowledge (urspruengliches Wissen) which is the presupposition for and yet contained in strife. It is "transcendental" because it never originates within the strife itself. The second part

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[24] Ibid., p. 120.

[25] Ibid., p. 121: "Und haben wir erst dieses erreicht, so hoeren die ersten beiden Zwecke auf, denn dann gibt es kein fragmentarisches Wissen mehr und selbst keine streitigen Vorstellungen."

is called "formal" and it is concerned with the manner in which thought is connected.[26]

B. Religious consciousness as the nucleus of dialectics

In his inaugural address before the academy of the sciences at Berlin, Schleiermacher defined it as one of the chief tasks of philosophy "to present a new vision of that mysterious operation, the gaining of knowledge, as it bears even in its living nucleus the basic principles which mark its full grown structure."[27] We have seen how he considered the Phaedrus as exhibiting the nucleus of dialectics in such a manner that it anticipates the later unfolding of Plato's philosophy. We have seen furthermore how in his hermeneutics that same nucleus, namely creative activity (Selbsttaetigkeit), is the chief problem, for it not only is one among other elements; it rather is that element which is the essential center of thinking. Now we have seen how he considers the dialogue as the form of true thinking and we must therefore ask how the nucleus of this true thinking is presented in the Dialektik. This, however, means to inquire into Schleiermacher's concept of "selfconsciousness" or "feeling."[28]

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[26] Loc. cit.

[27] Schleiermacher, Werke, Part III, III, 5. See above, p. 30. "Eine neue Betrachtungsweise jener geheimnisvollen Operation, des Erkennens, in einem lebendigen schon die Grundzuege seiner kraeftigen entwickelten Gestalt in sich tragenden Keim öffenbaren."

[28] "[Die] Grundlagenfrage richtet sich ausschliesslich auf die Struktur des religioesen Selbstbewusstseins, wie sie

(1) The highest opposite: ideal and real, intellectual and organic function, concept and judgment. - We have noted above how Schleiermacher considers λόγος and ῥῆμα as the basic elements of Platonic logic and how dialectics is defined as the art of the proper connection and separation of concepts.[29] Schleiermacher translates or rather circumscribes λόγος with "concept" and ῥῆμα with "judgment" (Begriff und Urteil). "Judgment," however, may not be a very good translation of what he means by Urteil. Urteil for him retains the meaning of teilen, i.e., of separating. A true judgment is an Ur-Teilen, i.e., a dividing truly, rather than arbitrarily. The dialogue contains both these features; it divides dialectically in order to find the higher unit. Thus judgment and concept are in a constant interrelation. Whenever the two become one, truth has been found, i.e., thinking must have come to a point of congruency with being and the strife must have come to an end.

These two elements of Platonic dialectics must be found in dialectics as elements essential to the dialogue. Schleier-

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bei Schleiermacher im Rahmen seiner grossen systematischen Konzeption, insbesondere in der 'Dialektik' und in der an anderen Stellen vorgetragenen Theorie des Gefuehls in Erscheinung tritt. . . ." Rudolf Odebrecht, "Das Gefuege des religioesen Bewusstseins bei Fr. Schleiermacher," Blaetter fuer deutsche Philosophie, VIII (1934-35), 284.

[29] See above, p. 154.

macher introduces them by discussing the two "poles of thinking," namely the "organic function" and the "intellectual function." As always in his dialectics, he seeks out two obvious opposites which he discusses as natural elements of the dialogue. As we have seen above, genuine strife would be impossible if there were no objective being, i.e., something which in itself is not thinking but which can become the content of thinking. If thinking is not concerned with the objectively given, it turns into "fog and fantasy"; in losing its object, the dialogue loses one of its necessary conditions, for without an object no strife is possible. The other necessary precondition for the dialogue is the presence of some universal principles in thinking which make it possible that communication can go on, although it takes place in a situation where the partners disagree. Schleiermacher holds that there are two sides to thinking which correspond to the two major conditions for genuine dialogue: the organic function which poses objective being (the external world) and the intellectual function which forms the concepts and so orders that which the organic function supplies. Yet this ordering function must be in a necessary relation to the organic function and the organic function must be in a necessary relation to the intellectual function, for otherwise there can be no true knowledge, i.e., no identity between thinking and being. The two Platonic elements of dialectics, namely judgment and concept, contain the

definition of the relation between the organic and the intellectual functions, while "selfconsciousness" or "feeling" is their identity. Yet, before entering a discussion of these points, it is necessary to examine the "organic function" and the "intellectual function" a little more closely. Each act of thinking for Schleiermacher is

> a common product of human reason and of human organization. The human organism is that through which we come to that which is thought, and it is reason through which thinking as such always retains its form separate from that which is thought.[30]

Neither organization nor reason alone makes up thinking, but both together constitute thinking.

> We gain imaginations through the affects which objects have upon our sensory organs. The visible affects our eye, that which can be heard affects our ear, the impenetrable affects our organ of touch; through these causes come the stimulation to think. If thinking corresponds to the object, then we have a knowledge.[31]

Schleiermacher's use of the term "organization" is somewhat par-

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[30] Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 139: "[Die Antwort auf diese Frage wollen wir gleich so ausdruecken, dass jedes Denken] ein gemeinschaftliches Erzeugnis der menschlichen Vernunft und der menschlichen Organisation sei. Es ist der menschliche Organismus, wodurch wir ueberhaupt zum Gedachten als solchem kommen; und es ist die Vernunft, wodurch das Denken als solches durch seine Form immer vom Gedachten geschieden bleibt."

[31] Loc. cit.: "Wir kommen dazu den Vorstellungen durch die Einwirkungen, welche die Gegenstaende auf unsere Organe machen. Das Sichtbare wirkt auf unser Auge, das Hoerbare auf unser Ohr, das Undurchdringliche auf das Tastorgan; und auf diese Weise entsteht die Aufforderung zum Denken. Stimmt dies ueberein mit dem Gegenstande, so wird es ein Wissen."

ticular. It means as much as "the activity of the organism" to the extent that sensory perception comes through man's sensory organs. There is no sharp division between sense perception and reasoning, although the two activities are distinguishable functions. They are both interrelated and neither one is meaningful without the other.

> Organization is that which is related to the content of thinking, reason is that which is related to the form of thinking. Content comes through organization, form comes through reason.[32]

Man has the capacity to make the objects into a part of his thinking. The organism, however, is the being-open of the human being for that other being. Reason, however, is that through which "thinking remains the same for all possible objects." Schleiermacher puts much emphasis on the fact that there is no such thing as pure thinking in the sense of a thinking which is separated from the human organism. Again, this is shown by pointing out the dialectic nature of thinking, a dialectic which is not the dialectic of abstract thought but which is possible only in its actualized form, namely in language.

> One could think that there may be thinking which is independent of organization. Yet there is no such

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[32] Ibid., p. 140: "Die Organisation ist also dasjenige, was sich auf den Inhalt des Denkens, die Vernunft dasjenige, was sich auf die Form desselben bezieht. Der Inhalt wird durch die Organisation, die Form durch die Vernunft."

> thinking. . . . This holds true for even the thinking one does for oneself, for thinking is internal speaking and speaking is a part of organization.[33]

This argument may or may not be convincing; it still is indicative of Schleiermacher's concern to base all his dialectics on the conditions which are contained within the dialogue; thinking to him is always understood as speaking, as the dialectics that pass from question to answer, only to pose a new question which arises from the answer. Even the individual's internal thinking is seen as an internal dialogue. His insistence on the inseparability of the organic and of the intellectual functions exemplifies further his concern with objective reality. He opposes the various idealistic philosophers of his own day who reduce reality to thought; for him, objective reality and thought are not the same, neither is one entity to be reduced to the other one. Rather, an ultimate synthesis, in which the contradiction between the two is overcome, must be sought, but this synthesis does not extinguish what we know as polar opposites. Rather it is the ultimate unity from which the polar opposites proceed.

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33 Loc. cit.: "Man koennte nun meinen, es gaebe auch ein Denken, was ganz unabhaengig waere von der Organisation. Aber ein solches Denken gibt es nicht. . .es gilt auch fuer das Denken des eigenen. Denn das Denken ist innerliches Reden und dieses ist ein Teil der Organisation."

One may, of course, ask how he can be certain of the existence of such an ultimate unity. If one analyzes his argument logically, it appears to be circular. On the one hand, he argues from the opposites to their transcendent unity. On the other hand, it is possible for him to argue in this fashion only because he has already defined the opposites in terms of the unity to which the argument is supposed to lead. This objection probably can not be denied.

One may visualize the progression of Schleiermacher's thought as an ever expanding circle like the circles which expand on the pond after a stone has been cast into the water. The distance from all points of the circumference to the center is the same for any given moment. The circle expands and covers more and more space, but it does not change its relation to the center. Thus one may say that Schleiermacher's thinking expands like concentric circles rather than that it progresses like a straight line. The merely logical argument would correspond more to the linear progression where one step follows from the step before. Schleiermacher's arguments, however, are more the description of circles which have a certain center. They lack the necessity which seems to be inherent in a linear argument; they are more persuasion than demonstration. Their force to convince rests upon their penetration into what goes on actually, since the "stuff" of which they are made up is life itself. His arguments are thus, in a way, <u>argumenta ad</u>

hominem, to the extent to which Plato's arguments are likewise of such character. By this remark we do not intend to discredit thinkers who proceed in this fashion; rather, we want to point out the fruitfulness of their approach. When their arguments turn again and again to man; when they ask whether man must agree to such and such views, then they do not appeal to his opinions and prejudices: rather, they want to appeal to "the eternal in man," to that in him which participates in ontic structures. This is the practice of Socratic maieutics.

The argument itself oscillates between observation of the given and reflection upon the observation. Schleiermacher's two functions of thought should be understood in this frame of reference. The organic function is observation; the intellectual function is reflection upon that which is observed. Their interdependence is significant for both of them, for the fact that organization is not without reason means that it is not "just" sense perception and the fact that the intellectual function is not without organization means that thought has objective reality for its content. Yet, since the two functions are polar opposites, their transcendent unity remains the constantly anticipated goal. Until that goal is reached, the oscillation between the two must not find an arbitrary termination.

If one assumes that it were possible to have organization for itself on the one hand and reason for itself on the other, then the consequence would be mere chaos - i.e., the un-

ordered multiplicity of impressions - as the limit of the organic side of thinking, and one would have the imagination of mere being as the limit of the intellectual side of thinking. Yet, as has been shown, neither side of thinking is separated from the other, and it would help little to end strife if one would agree on these limits; neither from chaos would one be able to arrive at knowledge which is necessarily common, nor from pure being could one arrive at a development of opposites which are necessary, for each partner of the dialogue can develop different opposites from his organic activity. Thus it is necessary to find out what the actual relation is between the organic and the intellectual side of thinking. This necessary interrelation may aid in establishing the necessary principles according to which thinking is performed skillfully.

> In the relation among those two points the ground is formed which bears within itself the possibility for dissolving the strife among imaginations. If it is possible to supply a value for this formula, then we have solved the transcendental side of our task.[34]

This "value" which Schleiermacher seeks to insert in his equation is "selfconsciousness." Both together: the organic function and the intellectual function, if seen as identical, are selfconsciousness."[35] Yet, before entering a discussion of

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[34] Ibid., p. 149: "In der Beziehung aufeinander bilden also jene beiden Punkte den Grund, in dem die Moeglichkeit der Aufloesung streitiger Vorstellungen liegt. Gelingt es uns, dieser Formel einen Wert unterzulegen, so haben wir die transzendentale Seite unserer Aufgabe geloest."

[35] Ibid., p. 234.

this central concept, we should note the nature of the organic and the intellectual functions in its relation to the two Platonic elements, concept and judgment.

Knowledge, i.e., the end of strife, had been characterized as the end of conflicting ideas. It had become obvious that thinking can become knowledge when it is identical with being outside of thinking. Under the form of the opposites of "organic function" and "intellectual function" this would mean that these two functions must become identical, i.e., that they have nothing within themselves which opposes that which is within the other. "Impression must fill form completely and form must elevate impression above its chaotic condition."[36] This situation, when the two poles of thinking become one and the same, is called "conviction" or "rest" by Schleiermacher. It is that moment in the dialogue when one finds agreement and it is "nothing other than that the organic side merges completely into the intellectual side and that both penetrate each other fully."[37] It is the ultimate goal of the dialogue to reach this moment of rest.

> This [ending of strife] rests essentially upon the possibility of an interpretation of the two sides, and there is no difference between saying that the two poles of thinking - the organic and the intellectual side - belong together, or that the exter-

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[36] Ibid., p. 155.

[37] Loc. cit.

nal world - the basis of impressions - and reason belong together.[38]

This ultimate identity of reality and thought is the goal of the dialogue as well as its presupposition. Though it is never realized within the dialogue, it yet remains its <u>teles</u>.

The constant approximation of the two sides of thinking toward each other is not only the process which tends to overcome the subject-object tension but it also deals with the relation between the one and the many. As we have seen above, Schleiermacher holds that the outer limit of the organic function is the chaos of the infinite plurality of impressions while the outer limit of the intellectual function is pure being, the empty one from which one cannot proceed to actuality. In his discussion of idealism and realism Schleiermacher establishes two series which enable us to analyze his view on this matter.

organic function	intellectual function
real	ideal
judgment	concept
realism	idealism
particular (plurality)	pure being (oneness)

He introduces these series by saying that he considers the two

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[38] <u>Loc. cit.</u>: "Diese [Ruhe beim Aufhoeren des Streites] beruht aber wesentlich auf der Moeglichkeit einer solchen Durchdringung beider Seiten, und es ist gleich, ob wir sagen, die organische und intellektuelle Seite, die beiden Pole der Denktaetigkeit, oder die Aussenwelt, der Grund der Impressionen und die Vernunft gehoeren zusammen."

poles of thinking as corresponding to what most people mean by the distinction between the real and the ideal. Being as the object of thought, in so far as it becomes present through the organic function, is the real. Thinking, however, the process itself which is mostly the intellectual function and through which being becomes something internal to thinking, is the ideal.

Judgments are more a matter of the organic function while concepts are more a matter of the intellectual function. Judgment is directed toward the particular plurality of the actual while concept is directed toward its unity in the idea. If one follows only one of the two series without taking into account the other, i.e., if there is no oscillation between observation and reflection, then one has on the organic side consistent realism and on the intellectual side one has consistent idealism. (What he calls "consistent realism" is probably what one may call "empiricism" and what he designates as "consistent idealism" is speculative idealism. He argues for a "higher realism.") This means, however, that on neither side can one arrive at knowledge, since knowledge is only in the interpenetration of the ideal and the real.

> Both together are the totality of being. Everything that happens in the process of thought with regard to being can be knowledge only when the ideal and the real can be identified. If this presupposition would be wrong, then there were no idea of knowledge and there could be no urge to gain knowledge because there

could never be a point of rest.[39]

It is the fallacy of realism that it imagines it can build knowledge on judgment alone and it is the fallacy of idealism that it tries to build knowledge merely upon concepts.

> This posing of one form through which the other is excluded is repudiated by us. In actual thinking, we say, the approximation to knowledge is possible only under both forms.[40]

Both idealism and realism as consistent schools of thought are arbitrary endings of the strife and therefore are not real endings. The object of judgment, more in the realm of the organic function, is the particular while the object of the completed concept is the universal. Neither one can be without the other. Concept precedes judgment and judgment is the presupposition for concept. This seeming contradiction is indeed a contradiction, yet it is the condition of actual thinking. Idealism despairs of coming to terms with the particular, realism despairs of coming to terms with the universal. If either is carried out consistently, then the former ends up with pure being and the latter with mere chaos. Thus idealism and realism do by themselves not contain the possibility to end the strife. Thinking, if separated along these lines, is in a

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[39] Ibid., p. 177: "Und beides zusammen ist die Totalitaet des Seins. Alles aber, was nun in dem Prozess des Denkens in Bezug auf das Sein geschieht, kann nur ein Wissen sein, wo wir ueberhaupt das Ideale und das Reale als gleich setzen koennen. Waere diese Voraussetzung falsch, so existierte auch die Idee des Wissens nicht, und es koennte auch gar keinen Trieb dazu geben, weil nie ein Ruhepunkt eintreten koennte."

[40] Ibid., p. 222: "Das Setzen der einen Form, wodurch die andere Form ausgeschlossen wird, wird von uns geleugnet. Im

deadlock.[41]

This interrelation of the particular and the universal, of the real and the ideal, and the dialectic method through which the interrelation is performed, is that which Schleiermacher calls truly Platonic philosophizing. Therefore his plea to return to Plato, where λόγος and ῥῆμα, judgment and concept, are the basic elements of logic, and where dialectics is still the art of separating and connecting properly.[42]

This necessary interrelation of concept and judgment brings us to the limits of actual thought. It contains the "highest opposite" of space and time or of real and ideal. Schleiermacher parallels the opposites space and time to the opposites real and ideal. They are actually the same opposites, only that space and time are the highest opposites on the organic side of thinking and that real and ideal are the highest opposites on the intellectual side of thinking.

> The multiplicity of impressions which is marked by time and space is parallel to the opposite of the ideal and the real. Both opposites are the same, only that the one is in the intellectual function and the other in the organic function.[43]

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wirklichen Denken, sagen wir, ist Annaeherung an das Wissen nur moeglich unter beiden Formen."

[41]See above, pp. 163, 176.

[42]See above, p. 154.

[43]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 181: "Die Mannigfaltigkeit der Impressionen, die durch Zeit und Raum bestimmt wird, ist parallel dem Gegensatz des Idealen und Realen. Beides ist dasselbe, nur das eine auf die Weise der intellektuellen, das andere auf die der organischen Funktion gesetzt."

> Space is the organic manner of posing that which is posed in the intellectual function as the real, and time is the organic manner of posing that which in the intellectual function is posed as ideal.
>
> How then is an act of thinking with predominant organic function related to an act of thinking with predominant intellectual function? We shall hardly be able to find anything else than image and concept, both posed as the same but in different manner. The filled space is nothing other than the image of real being; filled time is nothing other than the image of ideal being. Ideal being is the concept of filled time and real being is the concept of filled space.[44]

When Schleiermacher first introduced the two poles of thinking as necessary for the conditions of strife, then he now verifies the nature and interrelation of the two sides by pressing the inquiry one step further. The two poles of thinking were necessary because thinking and objective being must be related to each other.[45] As such they illustrate the opposite and rela-

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[44] Ibid., p. 182: "Raum ist also die organische Weise dasjenige zu setzen, was in der intellektuellen Funktion als das Reale gesetzt wird; und Zeit nichts anderes als die organische Weise, dasjenige zu setzen, was wir auf der intellektuellen Seite als Ideales setzen.

"Wie verhaelt sich nun ein Akt des Denkens mit ueberwiegender organischer Funktion zu einem Akt mit ueberwiegender intellektueller? Wir werden schwerlich etwas anderes finden koennen als das Bild und den Begriff; beides als dasselbe gesetzt, aber auf andere Weise. Der erfuellte Raum ist nichts anderes als das Bild des realen Seins; die erfuellte Zeit ist nichts als das Bild des idealen Seins. Das ideale Sein ist der Begriff der erfuellten Zeit, das reale Sein der Begriff des erfuellten Raumes."

[45] See above, p. 170.

tion between the ideal and the real. Yet, if each is taken by itself, the ideal and the real appear to be the highest opposite in the intellectual side (since the organic and the intellectual function was found within the intellectual side itself). Space and time appear to be the highest opposites on the organic side. When he says "highest opposite," then he refers to the limit of the dialectic process. No higher opposite can be thought and all the other opposites can be subsumed to this highest one. Our impressions which are to begin with unordered impressions are subsumed under the highest opposites of space and time which correspond as images to the highest opposites of real and ideal in the intellectual function. The organic function is thus separated from the intellectual function in so far as the former culminates in the formation of images and the latter in the formation of concepts.

> Intuition as the third form of thinking is the absolute one-in-the-other of image and concept.[46]

Intuition is that which Schleiermacher has defined as rest, as the end of strife. Since both functions, the intellectual function and the organic function, are different and identical at the same time, their difference and their unity pose the ultimate problem for dialectics, because the dialogue

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[46] Ibid., p. 183: "Das Anschauen als die dritte Form ist das absolute Ineinandersein von Bild und Begriff."

finds its end when the two become one. Knowledge is given in actual thinking, at least at times and at least in part, and it is the very presupposition of the dialogue which is given in actuality. Ultimate knowledge is possible only when thinking is identical with being, when the organic and the intellectual functions converge, when the highest image corresponds immediately to the highest concept. Yet in actual thinking the two functions are never identical, even though they can be thought as the same, for whenever they are thought as the same, they must also be thought as different. The highest opposite is thus at the same time the limit of actual thinking, i.e., of thinking in the conditions of strife.

> The highest opposite, exhausting being within itself is thus the limit of actual thinking which we always want to think and which we yet cannot think. Knowledge [actual knowledge] begins only when we relate this thinking to filled space and time. The transcendent is therefore only in that which precedes.[47]

This sameness and difference which marks the two poles of thinking is the root of the problem which we encountered in the interrelation between judgment and concept. Judgment and concept are the two forms of thinking which are the actual ele-

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[47] Ibid., p. 186: "Der hoechste Gegensatz, als das Sein an sich erschoepfend, ist also die Grenze des wirklichen Wissens, die wir immer denken wollen und nicht denken koennen. Das Wissen geht erst an, indem wir diesen Gegensatz auf die Raum- und Zeiterfuellung beziehen. Das Transzendente ist also nur in diesem Vorausgehen."

ments of the dialogue. Even though judgment is mainly on the organic side and even though concepts are mainly on the intellectual side, neither element is completely without the other.

> Concept and judgment presuppose each other. The concept is all the more complete, the more it rests upon a cycle of judgments. The judgment is all the more complete, the more there is conceptualized within it, i.e., the more concept it contains. Each concept will be knowledge only to that extent as the judgments which are at its basis are knowledge. It seems that we have been caught in a circle; where shall we begin if we want to make the transition from concept to judgment or the other way around? Seeking the relation between the two we have arrived at a difficulty from which we have to free ourselves.[48]

Concluding this section on the highest opposites in Schleiermacher's dialectics we attempt to give a brief characterization of his thought. The one element which is most striking is his tendency to separate and to unite. He says that judgment and concept must interpenetrate each other as the forms under which the organic and the intellectual sides of thinking are represented in the dialogue: one may say that his careful distinction of these two elements on the one hand and his uniting them on the other hand is in itself a demonstration of what

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[48] Ibid., p. 192: "Begriff und Urteil setzen also einander voraus. Der Begriff ist umso vollkommener, je mehr er auf einem ganzen Zyklus von Urteilen beruht. Je mehr in einem Urteil begriffen ist, d.h. je mehr Begriff darin ist, desto vollkommener ist es. . . . Jeder Begriff wird nur in dem Masse ein Wissen sein, als die zum Grunde liegenden Urteile ein Wissen sind. Hier scheinen wir in einem Zirkel begriffen zu sein; denn wo sollen wir anfangen, wenn wir vom Begriff zum Urteil uebergehen wollen und umgekehrt. Indem wir das Verhaeltnis beider suchten, sind wir in Ratlosigkeit verfallen, aus der wir uns zu ziehen haben."

he proposes. Whenever he draws such distinctions he is forming judgments (Ur-Teile); and whenever he proceeds to show that what is separated is nevertheless interrelated, he forms a concept, i.e., he "takes together." This process of separating and uniting is at the same time a movement which is outgoing and returning; it is the oscillation between the subject and the object.

Heinrich Scholz in his study on Schleiermacher's and Goethe's inner kinship[49] comments that this duality or polarity is the principle with which Schleiermacher transcends Spinoza's monism: it is necessary to become two in order that the one can be envisaged as synthesis, making it possible to interrelate experience and perception (Erlebnis und Erfahrung).

> The meaning of this nostalgia for the one is not to weaken perception in favor of experience, rather experience is strengthened through perception which is in turn interpreted as an expression of experience. Thus the polarity of the appearances takes on the order, it becomes a revelation of the one, and both Goethe and Schleiermacher differentiate two major forms of polarity, one in the cosmos and one in the individual.

The universe itself is viewed as the interpenetration of polar opposites. In his ethics Schleiermacher defines (tentatively) this ultimate cosmic polarity as the material

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[49] Heinrich Scholz, Schleiermacher und Goethe, ein Betrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913), see esp. pp. 30 ff.

(dingliche) and the spiritual (geistige); the separation and interpenetration of these two principles is for him the life of the cosmos; this duality goes out from the one in which these polar opposites are united in a higher synthesis and it has the one as its teleology, but it is manifest in polarity. In the individual the organic function and the intellectual function in their polar relation parallel those cosmic principles. They are a going out of oneself and a returning back into oneself as diastole and systole.

Des Menschen Seele
Gleicht dem Wasser:
Vom Himmel kommt es,
Zum Himmel steigt es,
Und wieder nieder
Zur Erde muss es,
Ewig wechselnd.
(Goethe)

(2) The unity beyond the opposites: Schleiermacher's concept of feeling. - In seeking the relation between concept and judgment dialectics arrived at the point where concept and judgment form a circle, each presupposing the other. This situation is again an indication that the limits of actual thinking have been reached. Dialectics has now to move into the transcendent realm and it has to ask for the ultimate ground of thinking. This became necessary because the highest opposite has been reached which is known to be the same and different at the same time, yet which can never be thought as same and different. This is the limit of actual thinking which is envisaged

in the dialogue and which yet cannot become the actual content of the dialogue. The question now is for the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem of thinking, for the subject of thinking and for its ultimate object, for the "transcendental" center of thinking and for the transcendent object of thinking. Dialectics must succeed in this task if it is to discover the ultimate ground and telos of thinking. Furthermore, since the whole construct has been built on the supposition that dialectics discovers the nature of the dialogue, these termini may be introduced as postulates, but they must have some basis in actuality, they must be accessible in existence, even though they can not become the object of knowledge in the manner in which the opposites can become objects of knowledge. They must be given in actuality, since they are not only the theoretical but the actual conditions of strife, and they cannot yet be the object of knowledge in its ultimate sense, since they are not yet content of judgment and concept equally. If they were, the task of dialectics would have come to its end. Any attempt to make them the content of actual knowledge now means to draw them into the realm of the opposites which would mean that they themselves would become the object of strife; they cannot be actually given in strife, for if that were so, then they could not be the ultimate principles of the strife and the very precondition for strife, namely a necessary ultimate knowledge and necessary ultimate principles for composition, were not given.

"Selfconsciousness," or, more precisely, "immediate selfconsciousness" or "feeling," is the focus at which all the different lines converge. There is a point or a moment in thinking - maybe we should rather say: in existence - where both the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem are immediately apprehended, not in the form of actual knowledge and yet as the ground of actual knowledge. This center is "the living nucleus of the mysterious operation, the gaining of knowledge," a nucleus which "bears within itself the basic principles which mark the full grown structure of the gaining of knowledge."[50]

Schleiermacher defines feeling as the identity of will and thought. Georg Wehrung comments on Schleiermacher's introducing of will that "the discussion concerning willing is not quite the necessary connecting link between epistemology and philosophy of religion." Wehrung feels that Schleiermacher's discussion of will "is blown into the draft [of dialectics] almost by chance."[51] Yet the discussion of will and thought in their interdependence is the very basis for Schleiermacher's theory of feeling. Thus the very center of his dialectics would be unintelligible if his discussion of will had nothing to do "with that which precedes and that which follows," as

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[50]See above, p. 168.

[51]Wehrung, op.cit., p. 234.

Wehrung suggests.

The difficulty in which Wehrung finds himself at this crucial point seems to be related to his approach. Wehrung does not take Schleiermacher's dialectics as the theory of the art of strife. The "art of the dialogue," according to Wehrung, is but an additional argument with which Schleiermacher tends to "assure" the uniqueness of his dialectics. This art of the dialogue may have been "formed on Plato" but the actual basis for these dialectics is Kantian criticism. "In accord with his primary concern Schleiermacher takes his point of departure from Kant."[52] Thus Wehrung seeks to understand the concept of feeling in terms of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception.[53] It is natural that this approach cannot find much value in the introduction of will and thus it is dubious whether it can come to terms with the concept of feeling.

If we, on the other hand, try to understand Schleiermacher's dialectics as the theory of the art of strife, then we discover that will itself is an intricate part of the dialogue. Wehrung sees the introduction of will as an uncalled-for and insufficient transition from epistemology to philosophy of religion. Yet neither is Schleiermacher's discussion of the

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[52] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

[53] See above, p. 6.

organic and the intellectual functions "epistemology" nor is his discussion of feeling "philosophy of religion." One may call these parts in the Dialektik "epistemology" and "philosophy of religion" in so far as they treat subjects which are usually treated under such headings. Yet at the same time the essential nature of Schleiermacher's Dialektik is misunderstood when one assumes that these parts therefore are nothing but epistemology plus philosophy of religion. The essence of the argument can be discerned when both parts are seen as essential to the theory of the dialogue, i.e., to dialectics, and dialectics is not a discipline which simply unites all the other disciplines but which understands them as a unit because it strives to understand that process which is the essence within all the other disciplines, namely the dialogue. Thus dialectics may well treat of the subjects of which other disciplines treat, but it treats these subjects from a different perspective, namely from the perspective of pure thinking; i.e., it is concerned with that tendency within all strife which seeks indisputable truth.

Thus we should try to understand Schleiermacher's introduction of will as an element essential to the dialogue. While the dialogue on the one hand is concerned with the formation of judgments and with the formation of concepts, it has another element also, namely an inner urge, that which Plato

introduces as eros.[54] This element is now introduced by Schleiermacher as will. Although it is introduced fully only at the end of the transcendental part of his Dialektik, it was yet present implicitly before. It was not necessary to introduce it explicitly at an earlier point, because dialectics is mainly concerned with thinking, yet will was nevertheless a constantly assumed element of the dialogue, for without will the formula of pure thinking as "tendency to gain undisputed knowledge" is meaningless, since the tendency requires will as its basis. Just as the Phaedrus presents dialectics together with eros as its moving element and just as Plato discusses the nature of the philosopher by discussing the nature of eros in the Symposium, so Schleiermacher assumes will as the dynamic element within the dialogue, i.e., within thinking. The discussion of will is rather short, for "it would lead too far beyond our task to present will in its manifoldness in which we have presented thinking."[55] The relation between will and thinking is analogous to the relation between judgment and concept. He indicates this analogy by pointing out, that here too we are driven to the identity of the real and the ideal.

> Each willing has as its basis a thinking, and each connecting in thinking has as the measure of its fullness a willing.[56]

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[54] See above, p. 75.

[55] Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 283.

[56] Ibid., p. 280: "Jedes Wollen hat zum Grunde ein Denken; jede Verknuepfung im Denken hat zum Masse ihrer Vollkommenheit ein Wollen."

When thinking was discussed in itself without explicit reference to will, he found the same interrelation between judgment and concept in so far as there, too, judgment had as its basis a concept, but the concept itself depended for its fullness upon judgments.[57] This left us in a circle which was recognized as the limit of thinking and which asked for the transcendent nature of knowledge. The interrelation between will and thought poses an analogous problem. Yet the entire discussion has shifted to another level. What is the difference in level and why was the shift necessary?

The highest opposite had been the real and the ideal, or respectively: the concept of the real and the image of space versus the concept of the ideal and the image of time. These highest opposites, each being present in the organic and the intellectual functions were at the basis of the sameness and difference of judgment and concept, judgment being the form of the organic side of thinking, concept being the form of the intellectual side of thinking. An inquiry into the transcendent ground for the unity of judgment and concept has shown that such a ground cannot be found. The so-called "formulae for the transcendent ground" which emerge from judgment and concept do not fulfil the necessary condition for such a formula since they are not free of opposites.

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[57] See above, p. 185.

> Seeking a unity we have found only a twofold duplicity. . . . Does this mean that we are at the breakdown of our efforts? This would be so if we were to assume that we have to come to the end of our task and that we have to consider these formulae as final.[58]

What, however, is the fault in this attempt to find the transcendent ground for the unity of thought and experience, of ideal and real?

> The reason for the foundering of our undertaking lies in the fact that we wanted to <u>think</u> the transcendent. This way we cannot emerge from the opposites and we arrive at plurality instead of at unity. Thus we must take our point of departure from the identity of being and thinking within us in order to ascend from there to the transcendent ground of all being.[59]

As long as one strives to arrive at the transcendent ground from thought alone, one can never find the formula which one seeks, for thinking itself is always under the conditions of strife. "From something conditioned one cannot arrive at something unconditioned."[60]

Thus Schleiermacher is forced to take a different approach. For one, he turns from the <u>terminus ad quem</u> to the <u>terminus a quo</u>. The identity of the real and the ideal, i.e., of difference and unity which he has sought in the transcend-

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[58]Schleiermacher, <u>Dialektik</u>, pp. 269-270: "Eine Einheit suchend haben wir eine zweifache Duplizitaet gefunden. . . . Ist uns nun, indem wir auf diese Resultate gekommen sind, unser Unternehmen ganz misslungen? Es waere es, wenn wir glaubten, jetzt am Ende der Untersuchung zu sein und bei diesen Formeln stehenbleiben zu muessen."

[59]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 270: "Der Grund des Misslingens unserer Unternehmung liegt also darin, dass wir uns das Transzendente d e n k e n wollen. So kommen wir aus dem Gegensatz nicht heraus und gelangen zu einer Vielheit statt zur Einheit. Wir muessen also von der Identitaet des Seins und Denkens in uns ausgehen, um zu jenem transzendenten Grunde alles Seins aufzusteigen."

[60]<u>Loc. cit.</u>

ent ground is now sought in the actual source of thinking, i.e., in the thinking self.

> We carry within ourselves the identity of being and thinking; we ourselves are being and thinking, we are thinking being and being thinking.[61]

This turnabout from the object of thinking to the subject of thinking is but one phase of the different approach. Were it just this and nothing else, then the solution could not be found either. The ego is just as much within the realm of the opposites as long as it is merely the object of thinking. Even though we have here the "smallest" unit of thinking and being, of the ideal and the real, we still cannot find the unity of the opposites as long as we try to find it by way of thought alone. The unit of the ideal and the real which is free from opposites is obviously presupposed in the thinking subject just as it must be contained in the transcendent ground and yet it cannot be apprehended by the thinking subject qua merely thinking subject.

At this crucial point of the Dialektik Schleiermacher enters a deeper level than that of mere thought. We may say he enters the level of existence in its totality, using the word "existence" widely and without any of the specific conceptual

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[61] Loc. cit.: "Die Identitaet des Seins und Denkens tragen wir in uns selbst; wir selbst sind Sein und Denken, das denkende Sein und das seiende Denken."

limits which have been attached to it by various schools. Thought at this point remembers suddenly its own abysmal depth and discovers that it itself is not sovereign but is limited and interdependent on something else, namely on the power of will. Yet this element is now "blown in almost by chance"; rather it is the power which has moved this particular dialogue about the dialogue (Schleiermacher's Dialektik) just as much as it has moved all dialogue for centuries. Without will thought has no power; thought could not become actual in language and thought could not have the tendency to become pure thinking. Yet will itself is interdependent upon thought, for will in itself has no fullness, we may say, no content, if it is not grounded in thought. This interdependence of will and thought, analogous to the interdependence of judgment and concept, is the highest expression of that humility which marks Schleiermacher's dialectics from its beginning when it rejects the absolute point of departure and chooses the never resolvable tension as its locus instead.

The doctrine of the interdependence of will and thought could have well been the beginning of the Dialektik and all the rest could have been developed from this opposite; yet such an approach would have seemed too much like choosing some absolute point of departure upon which the system of pure thinking is erected. It would furthermore make the Dialektik useless, since it must begin with analyzing rather generally held notions, pro-

ceeding from there dialectically to that which is necessary; and thus, while progressing from one level to the next, it can arrive at the ultimate goal only because it has gone through the process of dialectics. The goal has been anticipated "prophetically." The question could be asked properly in the beginning because the answer had been anticipated, and the answer could be found only because the question had been asked properly. Even if it seemed as if the Dialektik has been moving at a level which was not the level of existence, it yet still has moved on this level. Even though thinking had been treated only within its own realm, the manner in which it was treated anticipated and tacitly contained the awareness of its limitation by and interdependence with will.

As Schleiermacher defined thinking in terms of the dialogue, i.e., as living process, so he finds the answer to his questions not merely in thinking itself, but in life at large, i.e., in existence. "In this interchange of thinking and willing temporal life is contained."[62] Yet there cannot be a zero between two activities which are interrelated. There is not really a change but a transition from one to the other. This transition from thinking to willing and from willing to thinking is the identity of the two activities.

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[62] Ibid., p. 286.

> Transition from one to the other and identity are properly the same and they are different only under the form of time. A transition is possible only when identity of both is in between the ending of one and the beginning of the other. Each thinking act is - if viewed from a different side - an act of will. In transition the form of time is posed, in identity it is negated.[63]

Just as in actual thinking the real and the ideal, judgment and concept are never completely identical and yet must have identity, since they interdepend upon each other, so in actual life thinking and willing are never identical. Under the form of time, i.e., in life as it goes on under the conditions of existence, willing and thinking are present as transition. Yet in the necessary identity of the two, i.e., at the mathematical point where they are one, the conditions of time are transcended.

> The transition of both functions, one into the other, must include the presence of each in the other, i.e., it must be posed as pure immediate selfconsciousness. This immediate selfconsciousness, taken as actually filled time, is designated by us as "feeling."[64]

Immediate selfconsciousness as "feeling" is not to be confused with what usually is designated by this term. Schleiermacher holds that it is "a deficiency in making proper distinctions"

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[63] Loc. cit.: "Uebergang aus einem zum andern und Identitaet sind eigentlich dasselbe und nur durch die Zeitform geschieden. Ein Uebergang ist nur moeglich, wenn zwischen Anfang des einen und Aufhoeren des andern Identitaet beider ist. Jede Denktaetigkeit ist, von einer andern Seite aus gesehen, eine Willenstaetigkeit. In dem Uebergang ist die Zeitform gesetzt, in der Identitaet ist sie negiert."

[64] Ibid., p. 287: "Der Uebergang beider Funktionen ineinander muss das Mitgesetztsein des anderen einschliessen, d.h. als reines unmittelbares Selbstbewusstsein gesetzt sein. Dieses unmittelbare Selbstbewusstsein, als wirklich erfuellte Zeit gesetzt, wollen wir durch den Ausdruck 'Gefuehl' bezeichnen."

if "feeling" is mistaken for subjective passiveness. That would rather be Empfindung, i.e., sentiment within the subject, affected by the object. Yet in feeling the very "subject-object opposite is excluded." "Feelings" in the sense of sentiment are not the identity of thinking and willing; they are simply neither one. Neither is feeling as immediate selfconsciousness to be confused with the reflected selfconsciousness. It is right to say that immediate selfconsciousness is the ego, the self. Yet immediate selfconsciousness "is the general form of having-oneself."[65] This is to be differentiated from the reflected selfconsciousness, where the self is the object of thought. There one reflects upon oneself as a particular person with such and such properties, etc. Immediate selfconsciousness, however, is beyond such reflection.

> In feeling we are assured of ourselves somehow, regardless of just how, as the unity of being which thinks willingly and which wills thinkingly.[66]

This awareness of the self is immediate and as such it is universal in all men. Reflection brings with it the individual differences but that which precedes reflection is universal. Therefore immediate selfconsciousness as the identity of all willing and thinking is in each man."[67] Whatever the object of

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[65] Ibid., p. 288: "Es ist die allgemeine Form des Sich-selbst-habens."

[66] Ibid., p. 289: "Im Gefuehl sind wir uns [als] die Einheit des denkend wollenden und wollend denkenden Seins irgendwie, aber gleichviel wie, bestimmt." (The "als" is our conjecture.)

[67] Ibid., pp. 288-289.

will and whatever the content of thought, immediate self-consciousness is always the same in so far as it is the indifferent identity in the transition of the two activities.

Yet this immediate consciousness is not only in the moment of transition, but it is in all willing and in all thought, since thinking always is an acting and acting always is a thinking.

> Thus we find feeling as unchanging in every moment as something that accompanies, whether the moment is predominantly one of thought or one of volition. Feeling seems to disappear when we are wholly given to an intuition or to an act; yet this only seems to be the case. Feeling, however, is always not more than accompanying. Sometimes it seems to emerge alone and it seems as if thought and action disappears in feeling; yet this too only seems to be the case. There are always traces of volition and seeds of thinking contained in feeling (or the other way around: traces of thinking and seeds of volition) even though they seemingly disappear.[68]

This feeling is the analogy to that which thought tries to reach and yet cannot reach, namely the transcendent ground which connects and thus eliminates the relative opposites. This, however, does not mean that immediate selfconsciousness is not given in time. Schleiermacher's emphasis on this point is over-

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[68] Ibid., p. 289: "Und so finden wir auch das Gefuehl als bestaendig in jedem Moment, sei er nun vorherrschend denkend oder wollend, immer begleitend. Es scheint zu verschwinden, wenn wir ganz in einer Anschauung oder in einer Handlung aufgehen; aber es scheint nur. Es ist aber auch immer nur begleitend. Es scheint bisweilen allein hervorzutreten und darin Gedanke und Tat unterzugehen; aber dies scheint nur, es sind immer Spuren des Wollens und Keime des Denkens oder umgekehrt beides, wenn auch wieder scheinbar verschwindend, darin mitgesetzt."

looked by those who approximate his feeling to Kant's transcendental apperception. Feeling is experienceable, although not in its purity.

> We do not deny that feeling is given in time, only it is not for itself but always with something other. It is because of this that we cannot neglect its non-temporal character which it has as such.[69]

In other words, feeling is beyond the opposites of temporality in so far as it is the indifference, the identity of the temporal elements. Yet it is given in time, only it is never given purely but always mixed with something else. The very fact that it is not subject to the conditions of change and opposites is the reason why it must be present within experience, but it must be present in a trans-temporal manner.

> This is the case in religious consciousness. Here feeling is directed toward that which is at the basis of all actual being and of all affections.[70]

Religious consciousness is the very center of feeling. In it neither thinking nor willing is present but it is the pure direction toward the transcendent ground. "We may explain this modification of immediate selfconsciousness in whatever terms we choose. We may call it fiction or deception, it still expresses the desire of man to grasp the transcendent."[71] The elimination

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[69] Ibid., p. 292: "Doch leugnen wir nicht, dass das unmittelbare Selbstbewusstsein in der Zeit gegeben ist, nur nicht fuer sich allein, sondern mit einem andern. Eben deshalb koennen wir seine Zeitlosigkeit an und fuer sich nicht leugnen."

[70] Loc. cit.: "Dies geschieht nun im religioesen Bewusstsein. Hier ist das unmittelbare Selbstbewusstsein auf dasjenige, was allem wirklichen Sein und allen Affektionen zugrunde liegt, gerichtet."

[71] Loc. cit.: "Wir moegen uns diese Modifikation des un-

of the opposites would not be possible if the transcendent ground were not represented in feeling itself.

> This elimination of the opposites could not be our consciousness if we ourselves were in it not something conditioned and something delineated. But not conditioned and delineated by something which itself is within the opposites - for then the opposites could not be eliminated - rather though that in which all thinking volition and all willing thought can be one in its relation to everything else, namely by the transcendent ground itself.[72]

Schleiermacher's dialectics culminates in his doctrine of immediate selfconsciousness and of the feeling of absolute dependence as its religious form. The question arises for us whether or not this is still Platonic in spirit or whether we have entered an entirely different realm. The last chapter has to deal with this question.

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mittelbaren Selbstbewusstseins erklaeren wie wir wollen, sei es als Fiktion oder Taeuschung, so ist doch das Bestreben des Menschen darin ausgedrueckt, das Transzendente zu ergreifen."

[72] Ibid., p. 289: "Diese Aufhebung der Gegensaetze koennte aber nicht unser Bewusstsein sein, wenn wir uns selbst darin nicht ein Bedingtes und Bestimmtes waeren und wuerden. Aber nicht bedingt und bestimmt durch etwas selbst im Gegensatz Begriffenes; denn insofern sind darin die Gegensaetze nicht aufgehoben, sondern durch dasjenige, worin allein das Denkend-wollende und das Wollend-denkende mit seiner Beziehung auf alles uebrige Eins sein kann, also durch den transzendenten Grund selbst."

CHAPTER V

THE CONGRUENCY OF THE CENTERS IN PLATO'S AND IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S DIALECTICS

A. The center of the dialogue as point of uncertainty

Schleiermacher's Dialektik professes to be a theory of the dialogue as it has been created by Plato as the form of philosophic communication. We have seen how Schleiermacher strives to develop his dialectics strictly under the one presupposition that the dialogue contains in itself the ultimate ground and the criteria for knowledge, that it presupposes and actually contains an awareness of the transcendent ground of knowledge. As such, Schleiermacher's dialectics combines epistemology and metaphysics; the formal principle - how knowledge is to be sought - and the material principle - what knowledge is thought - merge into one. The asking of the question, i.e., the striving for knowledge, is something that is conditioned from the very outset by the answer which is thought. Odebrecht's comment on Schleiermacher's Dialektik, that it is an earnest attempt to take seriously the problem of being as it has been posed by Plato in the Sophist,[1] is probably the wisest comment which has been advanced by recent Schleiermacher inter-

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[1] See above, p. 55.

preters. When Odebrecht comments, furthermore, that Schleiermacher has created in his Dialektik "the prototype of Socratic paideia without the hermeneutic appropriation of which all criticism on Schleiermacher's work is premature and unjust,"[2] then he has probably posed a theme which the interpretation of Schleiermacher has to follow up further.

The task remaining for the last chapter of this study is to ask and seek an answer to the question: in what respects can Schleiermacher's central concept - namely his "feeling" - be understood as Platonic? Until now we have been working from the periphery to the center, so to speak. Now we have to investigate this center. If it is true that Schleiermacher's dialectics is a theory of the dialogue, then his concept of feeling must symbolize what is actually at the center of the dialogue. It is obvious that Plato had no theory of feeling, at least not in such terms as it has been advanced by Schleiermacher. It would be futile to attempt to seek out any one concept in Plato which would correspond to this particular concept in Schleiermacher. Yet not only does Plato not have a definite concept which corresponds one-to-one to Schleiermacher's central concept, but in both thinkers' philosophies the concepts generally lack the mathematical precision of termini technici which

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[2]Odebrecht, Geistige Gestalten und Probleme, p. 118.

marks the concepts, for example, in scholastic thought or which has been the ideal of the great philosophers of the Enlightenment and which in our day is again sought by the logical positivists.

Aristotle's philosophy exhibits to some extent the tendency toward a conceptual fixation of that which in Plato's thought is still in flux. It seems that Plato's philosophy leads to Aristotle just as Aristotle is not possible without Plato having preceded him. In this respect Aristotle marks the end of a development. In Plato

> thinking elevates itself above the given world in order to find in the transcendent realm the key for an understanding of this world, although it does not remain in the transcendent realm. Thinking has therefore something as its content which eludes definite expression.[3]

Aristotle inherits the results which Plato has produced as a pioneer, and therefore he can bring the great movement to its natural conclusion.

> The height of this movement is undoubtedly there where the concrete content of the life of the nation's spirit Volksgeist is fully grasped within the conceptual realm and where thinking has not yet brought to fruition its powers of abstracting, of "enlightening" and of sublimating. This height is reached in Aristotle.[4]

To use Eucken's image we may say that in Plato thought is on its

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[3]Rudolf Eucken, Geschichte der philosophischen Terminologie (Leipzig: Veit & Co., 1879).

[4]Ibid., p. 12.

way to the system, but it does not yet produce the system. Concepts remain in their dialectical suspension. The system is definitely the goal, it is the telos of the dialogue; but it is never set forth in definite terms. As soon as the highest insight is reached, thought returns to the flux of life and begins the ascent again.

It has been Schleiermacher's main concern in his Plato-interpretation to point out this dialectical suspension in which all of Plato's thought remains, even when it reaches its highest point. Julius Stenzel, in his study on the development of Greek dialectics reaffirms Schleiermacher's observation.

> Only through a careful bypassing of all termini which one might perhaps know in advance could Plato hope to reach in his manner and in his dialogues the goal of Socrates, namely "not only to exhibit vividly his own thoughts to others, but by that very means vividly to excite and awaken theirs" (Schleiermacher, Platons Werke, I, 16). The meaning which is to be vivified in all must be fashioned from the medium of living language and it must never lose its contact with this language.[5]

In Schleiermacher's own thought we find the same anti-dogmatic concern. Eduard von Hartmann in his history of metaphysics points out that

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[5]Julius Stenzel, Studien zur Entwicklung der platonischen Dialektik von Sokrates zu Aristoteles (2d ed.; Leipzig and Berlin, Teubner, 1931), p. 163. See above, p. 53.

> nothing has contributed so much toward the contempt with which later speculative schools view the philosopher Schleiermacher than has the fact that he had the courage to reject apodictic certainty and still continued to philosophize.[6]

Like Plato, Schleiermacher is constantly "on the road" toward the system - so much so that his conceptualizing, for example, in his ethics, makes the penetration to its inner meaning as difficult as the form which Spinoza gave his ethics; yet, like Plato, Schleiermacher's thought remains in the dialectical suspension of the "not yet."

The interpreter of such philosophers encounters a great methodical difficulty. On the one hand, he must seek to penetrate to the very core of the thinker's thought and on the other hand, he can hardly find any one point which is at rest long enough to serve as a secure basis. By analogy one may say that one encounters not only an accidental difficulty but one of such principal character as Heissenberg defines in his theory of uncertainty. The very center which we try to bring to light cannot be fixed without its being no longer the object we seek to understand, for that very center eludes fixation. To use yet another metaphor, we may say that we can discern certain patterns which have the form of concentric circles; the central point of these circles is inaccessible, except as it is seen as the crossing point of diameters.

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[6]Eduard von Hartmann, Geschichte der Metaphysik (Leipzig: H. Haacke, 1900), II, 243.

We have so far followed the periphery of several circles and we have discovered that in both Plato and Schleiermacher these circles spell the problem of knowledge and understanding in an astonishingly similar manner. We have furthermore discovered that Schleiermacher leads us to the unknown center of his circle in his theory of feeling. Really to understand this center and to investigate whether it is the same as Plato's center requires that we draw at least two diameters. Therefore we attempt to draw two such diameters by posing the two questions, what Schleiermacher and Plato opposed and what they proposed in their work.

B. The historic problem: the autonomy of man

(1) Schleiermacher's situation. - We had occasion at an earlier point to discuss the inner unity between the "criticistic" part and the "religio-philosophical" part of Schleiermacher's Dialektik. Our purpose there was to show how Schleiermacher's introduction of will is not arbitrary but only natural if one takes seriously his claim to develop dialectics as the theory of the dialogue.[7] This theory, according to the nature of its object, presupposes at one and the same time that thinking is directed toward a transcendent ground but that it cannot grasp this transcendent ground. In other words, God is the ulti-

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[7]See above, pp. 189 ff.

mate telos of thought but thought cannot comprehend God within itself. God remains sovereignly beyond even the highest concepts which thought can form.

On the face of it, this seems like Kant's criticistic result. We have noted how Brunner praises the first part of Schleiermacher's Dialektik as truly criticistic, since he, like Wehrung considers Schleiermacher's reflections to be a reaffirmation of Kant's inquiries, leading to the theory of the antinomies of the mind.[8] This seeming correspondence between Schleiermacher's and Kant's results, however, disappears at once when Schleiermacher's approach is taken for what it is. It is not Kantian epistemology. Schleiermacher does not ask the question how synthetic judgments are possible a priori. He rather asks the question: What is man who knows that he does not know? He does not write a critique of pure reason and a critique of practical reason. Man is not thinking here and acting there, but man is himself a riddle since he acts with thought and thinks as acting. Furthermore, man is not an isolated being who reflects on his possibility of gaining knowledge, making this possibility his actual object. Man is rather essentially in communication. Before man ever begins to reflect about his gaining knowledge, he is actually in a process of gaining knowledge because he is in communication with other men and with the world

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[8]See above, p. 3.

around him. As Paul Tillich would say, the self-world structure is not to be established by philosophy, it is the indispensable precondition which always precedes thinking and acting. Kant's question is not general enough, it is not all-inclusive enough. He reduces the gaining of knowledge to the process of forming synthetic judgments a priori; in other words, Kant limits himself from the very beginning to the laws of logical reasoning as the proper medium for the process of gaining knowledge, an assumption which is at least as dogmatic as the dogmatism which he strives to overcome.

Thus Kant's theory of the antinomies of the mind should not be interpreted as the Augustinian awareness of the transcendent nature of God in the face of which man is but a finite creature. When Kant arrives at the conclusion that the proofs for the existence of God are untenable, he arrives there not because he is overwhelmed by the majesty of God but because he cannot admit such results by virtue of his prior assumption concerning the ultimate sovereignty of reason as he defines it. Kant's results are by no means a confession of creaturely finitude; they are much more an assertion of the ultimate freedom of autonomous man. Kant's point of reference is never anything else but himself, the freely thinking man who "constructs the world."

Quite in contrast to Kant, Schleiermacher from the very outset makes it clear that no system of thought and no a priori can serve as a basis for gaining knowledge. When he makes the

happening of the dialogue his only point of reference from which he can proceed, then he rejects the autonomy of finite reason as the ultimate judge for what can be known as truth and what can not be known. Thus, when he arrives at the result of his reasoning with the cognition that the formulae for the transcendent ground are contradictory in themselves, he only reaffirms what has been implicit in the very point of departure from which his dialectics takes its rise. Since this dialectics too is under the condition of strife, it is only natural that it cannot in itself contain the highest knowledge. Yet at the same time he does not discount the validity of the formulae for the transcendent ground. They retain their validity if they are related to feeling in which the transcendent ground manifests itself.

The difference between Schleiermacher and Kant at this point may best be understood if one considers that Kant is interested in the proofs for the existence of God and that Schleiermacher is not. It is coherent with Kant's basic approach that for him postulate and proof are one and the same. If autonomous reason is the last authority then that existence of God is evidenced whenever the thinking of God is necessary. Although theoretical reason does not necessarily demand the idea of God - though this idea may serve as a regulative idea -, Kant believed that he still had proved the existence of God, since practical reason demands an ultimate lawgiver. But again, this "proof" must not be confused with the classical moral arguments, such as

the argument e gradibus bonorum. Kant has no concept of a highest good toward which the moral faculties of man are directed. The categorical imperative is just as much a category within autonomous man as are the categories of theoretical reason. Kant rejects expressly the direct deduction of the moral law from the will of God, because this would invalidate the autonomous dignity of man. The postulate of practical reason is actually not an argument for the existence of God but an argument for the autonomy of man.

Schleiermacher never dreamed of arguing for the existence of God. Such an argument in his terms would be blasphemy, since neither theoretical reason nor man's moral faculties are sufficient to ascend to the highest being or to the highest good. Schleiermacher, however, admits that the transcendent ground is a postulate of reason. But a postulate for him is not an argument. Commenting on Kant's discussion of the problem, he says

> "Existence of God" [Dasein Gottes] is in itself an odd [wunderlich] expression, and it is even more odd if one wants to prove it theoretically.[9]

Schleiermacher rejects Kant's view that theoretical reason can do without postulates. It is fallacious to assume that man is brought to the transcendent ground on the side of will but not on the side of thinking. Schleiermacher makes it clear that the difference between his approach and that of Kant is as much in

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[9]Schleiermacher, Dialektik, p. 281.

the results as it is in the very beginning of their reflections.

> Comparing our reflections with those of Kant, we can see that from the very outset we had to arrive at an opposite view, because we always sought postulates for knowing. This has its reason in the fact that we considered the entire process of thinking from its practical side - namely to dissolve contradictory imaginations.[10]

In other words, Schleiermacher's dialectics is altogether different from Kant's critique. Both thinking and willing (roughly corresponding to Kant's theoretical and practical reason) have postulates for the transcendent ground, but these postulates are not proofs for the existence of God. They rather show that neither thinking nor willing can ascend to God, although they are directed toward their transcendent ground.

> If the transcendent ground must be postulated for will equally as much as for thinking and if both are one and the same, then we cannot arrive at the transcendent from either thinking or willing. <u>The transcendent ground can be recognized only in the identity of thinking and willing</u>, i.e., when both complement each other and penetrate each other.[11]

The difference between Kant and Schleiermacher consists in the fact that Kant is seeking to confirm the autonomy of reason where

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[10] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 282: "Vergleichen wir unsern Gang mit dem Kantischen, so sind wir von Anfang an auf das Entgegengesetzte gekommen, weil wir gleich Postulate fuer das Wissen suchten. Dies kam daher, weil wir den ganzen Prozess des Denkens von seiner praktischen Seite (naemlich streitige Vorstellung zu loesen) betrachteten."

[11] <u>Loc. cit.</u>: "Wenn der transzendente Grund des Wollens ebenso notwendig postuliert werden muss wie der des Denkens und beide ein und dasselbe sind, so werden wir uns des Transzendenten weder von der des Denkens noch des Wollens allein bemaechtigen koennen. Der Transzendente Grund des Seins wird somit nur in der Identitaet des Denkens und Wollens erkannt werden koennen, d.h. wenn beide einander ergaenzen und sich wechselseitig durchdringen."

Schleiermacher is seeking to express man's dependence upon God. Therefore Schleiermacher does not end his inquiries at the point of the aporia where reason must postulate a transcendent ground and cannot reach it. "We would have foundered in our striving if we would assume that we have arrived at the end."[12]

Then, however, Schleiermacher turns away from reason alone and develops his theory of immediate selfconsciousness which at its very depth is the immediate awareness of dependence upon God. This doctrine is so much in contradiction to the tradition of that stream of philosophy which is usually considered to start with Descartes and to reach its culmination in Kant, that it has been difficult to appreciate the full impact of what is implied. In Descartes, we may say, the autonomy of man has become proclaimed. We follow Gerhard Krueger's analysis[13] which shows that Descartes like Augustine finds himself in a situation of crisis, causing radical doubt. Augustine, like Descartes, is driven to the "I doubt." Augustine finds the victory over his doubt when he recognizes himself as accepted by God; Descartes finds the victory over his doubt because he affirms himself in the unfounded freedom of the doubting ego. Although Descartes

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[12] Ibid., p. 170.

[13] Gerhard Krueger, "Die Herkunft des philosophischen Selbstbewusstseins," Logos, Internationale Zeitschrift fuer Philosophie der Kultur, XXII (1933).

is by no means atheistic in the sense that he rejects the notion of a highest being, he yet introduces God into his system of thought after this system has found its secure basis in the selfconscious and self-affirmed ego.

> Selfconsciousness constitutes itself [with Descartes] in spite of and against divine omnipotence: this is not "Christian inwardliness"; rather here begins in philosophy as such that insurrection against Christianity which we call Enlightenment.[14]

Structurally the same relation obtains between Kant's moral man and God as a postulate of practical reason.

In Schleiermacher's dialectics we have an approach which is essentially opposed to this enlightened spirit. We have noted above how it is a precondition of Schleiermacher which makes it possible for him to overcome the systematizing interpretations of Plato which were prevalent under the rule of the Enlightenment.[15] His identification of selfconsciousness with ultimate dependence is the violent rejection of the spirit of the Enlightenment. For him God is not to be affirmed or denied by human speculation but God is the actual ground of all speculation. God indwells in man at the deepest center of his being so that each action and each thought is ultimately dependent upon God. Thus it is God who works both to will and to do. This outcome of the Dialektik is

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[14] Ibid., p. 246.

[15] See above, pp. 44 ff.

implicit when all of man's thought (and action) is viewed in the suspense of Socratic dialectics. Because of man's ultimate dependence upon God, man's thought must be directed toward a highest knowledge and yet cannot attain this highest knowledge. Neither can truth be fully embraced in any one highest concept nor is man's thought doomed to falter in scepticism. Finite remains finite but it receives its meaning when it is related to the feeling of dependence. In Platonic terms this would mean that the particular participates in the idea. By the same token Schleiermacher has to introduce the organic function as a necessary component of thinking. Thought is not sovereign over the world. It is not the categories of the mind which form the world but it is the world itself with its own structures that is perceived by man. Thus when Schleiermacher constantly presses the point that thought and being must be identical, he does not propose a philosophy of identity as it is proposed by the early Schelling, for Schelling proposes an immediate identity of thought and nature without reference to a transcendent ground. Schleiermacher presupposes this identity within the transcendent ground; in this life this identity is reached only as a moment of rest within the dialogue, never is it reached absolutely. Yet the postulate that thought and reality must become identical where truth is found is another feature of his opposition to the doctrine of autonomous man which culminates in Kant's theory of the categories as forming the world.

This discussion may suffice as one of the "diameters" which we intended to draw. To summarize it in one sentence, we may say that Schleiermacher's reaffirmation of Platonic dialectics, culminating in the theory of ultimate dependence as the actual ground for existence is identical with his rejection of the Enlightenment's heritage. Whatever the theological merits of Schleiermacher's philosophy may be, this point must be taken seriously, even today, for it seems that we are still struggling with the same problem.

(2) Plato's situation. - In the Republic Plato defines the vision of the good as the ultimate culmination of dialectical activity. There has been much discussion about whether or not Plato's good is absolutely transcendent. Leaving aside this question concerning the place of the good within the structure of the ideas we want to point out that Plato rather late in his life reaffirms to some extent his statement in the Republic according to which the good "lives beyond being." Making an emphatic point of it, he rejects the allusion that he has written a book on the good.

> For it is not like other objects of learning. It cannot be put into words; rather it emerges within the soul after a long methodical concern for the matter, carried on in the proper community. It emerges suddenly within the soul like a light which has been kindled by a spark; there it feeds on itself.[16]

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[16] Plato Letters 7, 341.

The analogy between Plato's vision of the good and Schleiermacher's immediate selfconsciousness or feeling must not be pressed too far. Yet there seem to be striking similarities which suggest that Plato's vision of the good may be the center of the circle which we seek to find. The good as the ultimate ground of all existence must be pursued in tireless studies. It is noteworthy that Plato at this crucial point circumscribes dialectical pursuits with "living in the proper community." As later for Schleiermacher, so for Plato the academy was indispensable. Platonic dialectics need the actual dialogue among actually living people who in their communal posing of the questions and giving the answers expand philosophical inquiry and advance it to higher and higher realms. (Kant, for example, could philosophize in his study by himself.[17] Hegel makes it even an explicit postulate for philosophy that it has to be carried out in isolation from the trivialities of actual life.[18]) Although Plato's philosophy strives after <u>theoria</u>, <u>theoria</u> is not the impartial spectator's view who stands outside of life.

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[17]For this very reason, Dilthey's biography of Schleiermacher is so invaluable to an understanding of Schleiermacher's work. As Dilthey says in his introduction: "The philosophy of Kant can be understood fully without any close consideration of his person and of his life; Schleiermacher's importance, his view of the world and his works need a thorough biographical presentation for their proper understanding." Dilthey, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. xv.

[18]See, e.g., the introduction to Hegel's <u>Wissenschaft der Logik</u> (3 vols.; Berlin: Dunker and Humblot, 1833), I, 10 ff.

He who wants a theoria of life must himself stand within life. The vision of the good to which dialectics finally leads is not the outcome of dialectics in the same way that the solution to a mathematical equation is the outcome of that equation. As in Schleiermacher's dialectics, the culmination is not a rheton, something that can be expressed in the sense that other mathemata can be expressed. Here, too, the transcendent ground reveals itself when dialectics has led to the ultimate limit of finitude and it reveals itself deeply within the soul.

Returning to our proposed procedure, we must draw now the other diameter for the circle. What did Plato oppose in his philosophy? Gerhard Krueger has shed much light on this question in a recent study of the essence of Platonic thinking.[19] In his book Einsicht und Leidenschaft he pursues the question of the religious nature of Plato's thought, taking the Symposium as his major source. These questions can be investigated more and more fruitfully, since our image of the religion of the early Greek world takes on more substantial forms. The work which has meant most in this matter - at least on the German scene - is Walter F. Otto's Die Goetter Griechenlands, Das Bild des Goettlichen im Spiegel des Griechischen Geistes.[20] Krueger shows the intricate relation between eros and philosophy in Plato. Plato's opposition

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[19]Gerhard Krueger, Einsicht und Leidenschaft, das Wesen des platonischen Denkens (2d ed.; Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950).

[20]Walter F. Otto, Die Goetter Griechenlands, Das Bild des Goettlichen im Spiegel des griechischen Geistes (3d ed.; Frankfurt: Gerhard Schulte-Blumke, 1947).

to the sophists is not only a "philosophical" opposition but a religious one. The old Greek religion with its myth of multiple divine powers has broken down. The sophist movement highlights the arrival of enlightenment. Man has become conscious of himself. This growing into selfconsciousness necessarily destroys the faith in the ultimate sovereignty of the gods in the face of which man's action was but passion. Tragedy poses the problem differently from the way in which the sophists pose it. In the tragedy man's predicament is seen as one who is free and who is yet caught in the powers that transcend his freedom. In so far as man is no longer merely passive, however, but essentially active, the tragedy also brings to light the new situation.

The sophists assume the freedom of man without reference to a transcendent power. For them man is autonomous. All the speeches in the Symposium express this self-asserted autonomy of man - that is, all except the speech of Socrates and, to some extent, that of Aristophanes. If one considers that eros in the Symposium is introduced as taking the place of Dionysus, then it is striking to see how Pausanias, Erixymachus and Agathon consider eros as an element that can be manipulated. These sophists consider eros no longer as a passion which takes hold of man and leads him beyond himself but they take eros as a power which they have under control.

Pausanias discusses *eros* in terms of enlightened morality. He distinguishes between a "good *eros*" and a "bad *eros*." The bad *eros* is that *eros* which tends to intimidate man's sovereign autonomy, and it must therefore be excluded. The good *eros* is approximated to human wisdom which acts in such a manner that everything "remains under control." The moral principle which Pausanias formulates is, typically enough, formalistic. None of man's activity is good by nature. In itself it is neither ugly nor beautiful. It receives its value from how it is performed; i.e., man is the one who supplies ethical value.[21] Krueger gives an interesting commentary:

> The modern reader feels reminded of Kant's formalism; this seems plausible: not the action which receives its *materia* through its purpose is at the basis of moral value or un-value of acting; it is rather the "intention," i.e., the "form" which is decisive. Modern thinking rejects in its basic tendency an "ethics of goods". . .because modern man can retain his most important concern, namely the sovereign independence from higher powers, only when the ultimate qualification of action remains with the actor himself. . . . Ethical formalism, therefore, is as such essentially bound up with the Enlightenment.[22]

An analysis of the other speeches leads to the same results. Erixymachus is the one who "knows the world." As a physician he has his own theories about harmony and disharmony.

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[21]Plato *Symposium* 180e-181a.

[22]Krueger, *Einsicht und Leidenschaft*, p. 101. The term "modern" is here used as synonymous with "enlightened."

Like Pausanias, he is concerned with a real problem. Pausanias is concerned with the problem of morality, a problem which faces man when he has grown conscious of his freedom. Erixymachus discusses the problem of the kosmos which has also become a problem with the disappearance of the mythical religion. Yet, like Pausanias, he discusses it in terms of the spirit of enlightenment. For him eros is the technical means by which man brings order into disordered situations. Again, he is sovereign over that which actually is something beyond the autonomy of man. Agathon, finally, who, according to his profession, should treat of the tragic situation of man, is but an outright caricature of what he is supposed to be. He does not get further than changing eros playfully into a masquotte, symbolizing the age "which has grown mellow and 'civilized.'"[23]

There is but one theme which runs through all the speeches of the sophists present at the banquet, and that is the tendency to exclude the divine in favor of the autonomy of man.

Over against this sophistic enlightenment stands Socrates with his speech, relating the way in which Diotima has introduced him into the mystery of philosophy. She has taught him to understand eros as the mediating power which bridges the gap that has opened between man and the divine. The sophists did not see the problem in its depth. They accept the fact, "God is dead," but

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[23] Ibid., p. 136.

they accept it happily. Plato accepts it as an ultimate crisis which either must be overcome or the polis will die. In the desperate situation of the separation of man from the gods, eros appears as the mediator. Eros is that paradoxical passion which is at one and the same time within the "secular" world and which is yet from over and beyond this world.

> The threatening gap between God and man would be unbridgeable, were it not for the appearance in the worldly life itself of the power of the one paradoxical passion, the name of which is eros. Plato enforces the problem of the mystery religion, for he knows the new selfconsciousness of man just as radically as the Enlightenment knows it. If then no love of God to man, the name of which is grace, can bridge the gap, the demonic love of man can lead man to God - or at least can want to lead him to God - pressing him beyond the dissatisfaction with the merely earthly. Eros takes the place of Christ in the "mystery" of Plato's philosophy; eros is the mediator. This is the "theological" meaning of Diotima's teaching: the demonic "which stands in between God and man , bridging the gap so that the universe is closed within itself" (202e).[24]

This demonic power which is man's and which is yet from beyond man is that which moves the dialectics from the world of the senses to the world of the ideas and which finally brings man to that point where the good itself appears in his soul.

Plato - like Schleiermacher - is also "modern." The enlightenment is not a "theory" which can be simply rejected. It is not a philosophical school which has to be shown as basically erroneous. The enlightenment is a fact, as irrevocable as man's growing from childhood into manhood. The unselfconscious

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[24] Ibid., p. 154.

state of the child's life cannot simply be repristinated. Once the threshhold to the discovery of the active center in the self has been crossed, one cannot return. The unselfconscious state is irrevocably gone once the self has been discovered. This, however, does not necessarily mean that man has to remain in the autonomous state of Enlightenment. He has the possibility of passing into a self-forgetting state. The child simply lives in that state; it has dependence without being aware of it consciously. He who has grown aware of himself can also grow aware of his dependence when he once more accepts that which is immediately given to the child.

Schleiermacher's theory of feeling as the awareness of the self in its dependence upon the transcendent ground and Plato's doctrine of <u>eros</u> as the divine mediator seem to correspond to each other. Each of these two thinkers answers the question of enlightenment in his own situation with the same answer: man is not ultimately autonomous. The self-asserted autonomy is not man's destiny. True freedom, i.e., true realization of his nature is found then when man accepts himself as essentially a dependent creature. The doctrine of <u>eros</u> in Plato and the theory of feeling is in both thinkers at the very center of dialectics, and at the same time it expresses their central concern with regard to their polemic tasks.

C. The historic task: "religious sciences"

We now have to draw still the other diameter by asking the question what Plato and Schleiermacher proposed. It would lead beyond the scope of this study if we would venture a full discussion of the system of the sciences which Schleiermacher has intended to realize in his work. As we have seen above, he had the vision of "the contract between religion and the sciences." Heinrich Scholz has pursued this question more carefully than probably any other interpreter has done.[25] Scholz, however, is mainly concerned with The Christian Faith. An interpretation of Schleiermacher which embraces all of his work and presents it as understood from Schleiermacher's own central affirmations is still to be undertaken. It seems, however, that the groundwork for such an interpretation emerges more and more. It is an unfortunate accident that Rudolf Odebrecht was met by a sudden death, for no other interpreter has as yet come forth with such a penetrating understanding of what is at the center of Schleiermacher's work as has Odebrecht. He has, however, made Schleiermacher's Dialektik available, and he has given an initial lead to the interpreters of Schleiermacher in his article on the Socratic spirit in Schleiermacher's work. It is almost

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[25]Heinrich Scholz, Christentum und Wissenschaft in Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre (Berlin: Arthur Glaue, 1909).

imperative that Schleiermacher's hermeneutics also be made available if the interpretation of the whole of his work is to grow to its full fruition. This need will doubtlessly be met when Odebrecht's lead is followed by others, i.e., when the Platonic structure of Schleiermacher's thought is investigated more and more.

At this time we can only discuss in rather general terms to what extent Schleiermacher's idea of the system of the sciences may be understood as essentially Platonic.

Schleiermacher reaffirms Plato's emphasis on dialectics as that science which discovers the ultimate basis for all other sciences. None of the particular sciences can claim to further the gaining of knowledge concerning its object of inquiry if it does not "emanate" from that process of inquiry which is concerned with knowledge as such.

This view of Schleiermacher has been widely criticized, especially by those theologians who hold that Schleiermacher subordinates theology to dialectics and to ethics. The problems which he has created are indeed numerous and there are certain tensions within his own system which make it difficult for the interpreter to arrive at a unified view of his thought. One must, of course, keep in mind that Schleiermacher wrote his various works at different stages of his life. It is natural that he himself had to struggle for clarity. As we have noted

above, only with the year 1822 did his lectures on dialectics begin to assume their mature form. Thus it seems essential to come to an understanding of Schleiermacher's intentions which in turn must serve as principles for interpretation and criticism of his work as a whole.

What does it mean when Schleiermacher holds that all particular sciences must have their basis in dialectics? It seems to mean basically two things. On the one hand it assures the unity of the sciences, and on the other hand it keeps the sciences from being absolutistic. Dialectics, as we have seen, is in constant ascent to the highest and again in descent to reality. In its descent it gives birth to the sciences. The sciences must have a unity, since they all deal with reality which is ultimately one. The Platonic vision of the world as a kosmos necessitates that there is also a kosmos within the sciences that deal with reality. Yet, since man is finite and since he can therefore deal with reality only in fragmentary fashion, none of these fragmentary inquiries can serve as the basis for another one. The unity among these separate members is in something third, namely in dialectics. It seems to Schleiermacher irreligious if a science is based on some arbitrary assumption, for this means that it is based upon some capricious act of man. In his terms this would be frivolity.[26]

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[26]Schleiermacher, "Sendschreiben an Luecke," Werke, Part I, II, 581.

Only if Schleiermacher's dialectics is understood as a static aggregate of apodictic statements concerning the nature of knowledge, can one interpret his view of the system of the sciences as a forceful subordination of otherwise autonomous disciplines. Yet one must keep in mind that dialectics means not a sovereign declaration of man's ability to order the universe around him. Rather it culminates in the cognition of man's dependence. If the sciences are thus made dependent upon the dialectic process, it means that they are constantly related to that awareness of the transcendent ground in which dialectics culminates. The "subordination" is not meant to be a servitude but it is meant to be an access to the ultimate ground which is at the basis of that reality with which the sciences deal. It means an affirmation of the worth of the sciences, rather than a frustration. In spite of the necessarily fragmentary character, they can yet confidently pursue knowledge since they, in their relation to dialectics, participate in and have access to the transcendent ground. This affirmation of the sciences is, of course, also an assertion of their fragmentary character. In this respect it is also directed against the assumption of science as autonomous.

In some such terms the riddle of Schleiermacher's Lehnsaetze must be resolved. It is necessary to investigate the question to what extent he actually realizes his program, according to which each discipline retains its own independence to the ex-

tent to which its "content" is concerned, but receives its "scientific" character (Wissenschaftlichkeit) from its relation to dialectics and to ethics respectively.

We hesitate to go beyond these few general observations which must remain programmatic more than anything else. If we should venture a detailed discussion of Schleiermacher's ethics and of his dogmatics, we would have to make it an extended inquiry. The problem of Schleiermacher's relation to contemporary views, to the tradition of the Church as well as that of the growing development of his own thought concerning an almost infinite variety of subjects would have to be dealt with. Such an inquiry must not remain a half-finished job. What Schleiermacher said about his Plato-project holds equally true for an interpretation which wants to deal with his work as a whole: The years that may have to pass must be counted as nothing. In the conclusion we shall discuss "informally" what, at this stage of our acquaintance with Schleiermacher, seems to us the principal relevance of his work for our own day.

Ending this discussion, it may be noted that Schleiermacher's and Plato's "programmes" of the "system of the sciences" seem to converge again in that point in which their answers to enlightenment have converged. The sciences, too, in their relation to dialectics, partake of that which is made available to man where he recognizes himself in dependence upon God. This classical structure of the hierarchy of the sciences has a cer-

tain oddity for the modern observer, but anyone who is aware of the chaotic state in which our universities find themselves will agree that here an ideal is envisaged which we have the task of solving in one way or another.

CONCLUSION

The remaining pages are devoted to the question of the relevance of Schleiermacher's work for our own day. In order to deal with this question we have to widen our scope, and we have to add elements to our discussion which have been present implicitly so far, but which need to be made explicit if we proceed to give an evaluation. These elements reflect to some extent our interest in the object with which we have dealt, and they have therefore been instrumental in formulating the question with which we have approached our material. It is only natural that any inquiry should reflect the situation of the inquirer, since no question can be asked because of merely "disinterested curiosity." One does not ask a question just because it so happens that one takes a sudden fancy to some object or another which one wants to explore. Somewhere at the bottom of it all the inquirer is interested, i.e., he is "in the midst of it" (inter-esse), he participates in what he does. To point toward the subjective origin of a question does not mean to reduce inquiry to subjectivism. On the contrary: whenever the subject asks a question, it moves beyond itself and thus indicates its desire for objectivity. Subjectivity and objectivity are not elements, one of which can stand without the other. Ob-

jectivity is attainable for us only when we as subjects participate in the object, so much so that in the process of inquiring into the object the subjective root from which the original question sprang is transformed into something that is itself objective.

Schleiermacher's approach is the best example to illustrate what we want to say. He thought of the dialogue, i.e., of the asking and answering questions, as a happening in which the subject itself demonstrates its objectivity that is sought in the dialogue. The partners of the dialogue are and always remain subjects, individuals in their own right. Yet they also participate in objective, permanent reality, in ultimately universal structures, which they "practice" even if they do not know it. Subjectivity must be affirmed, i.e., the partners must take themselves and the others seriously, if objectivity is to be found. The dialogue must be pursued to its ultimate limits in order that its ultimate ground may appear within and beyond the flux of its movement. Subjectivity, understood in such terms, does not mean solipsism; it means the very opposite, namely the awareness of the participation in structures which are beyond the subject. Therefore Schleiermacher's dialectics has to culminate in the doctrine of dependence; selfconsciousness is consciousness of the cosmic structure of which the self is a part and which is <u>in toto</u> dependent upon God.

The polar relation of subjectivity and objectivity which appears in all inquiry is manifest in the sciences of the spirit (Geisteswissenschaften) as the polarity between history and ethics. Historical knowledge is of ethical significance and ethical knowledge precedes historical inquiry. The study of history and of ethics presuppose each other. Logically they form a circle; actually they are two poles between which inquiry oscillates. Whatever our ethical views contain informs our approach to history, and whatever we find in history informs our inquiry into the problems of ethics. It would be unwise to establish either pole as an absolute point from which the other can be judged. Such phrases as "history has proven" mean nothing if they are to express that any one occurrence in history has been understood so fully that it can serve as an instance from which ethical norms can be derived. Neither can a certain ethical norm be established as an absolute from which historical reality can be judged. The "stuff" of history is itself ethical and the "stuff" of ethics is itself history.

If we for instance judge medieval literature as "unimportant" because it lacks "originality," we say in effect only that, according to our ethical norm, "importance" is linked with "originality." In other words, we take the modern situation in which the individual plays a predominant role and superimpose the norms which are valid in this situation on another era in

which the structure of norms is of different character. One may approach this question from the other side and argue that our concept of originality is actually a sign of lack of spiritual substance. Medieval literature is "unoriginal" because that era had a wealth of spiritual substance which was actualized again and again in the liturgy, in epic writings and in philosophical and theological works. The ethical value of these writings is in its very "unoriginality," for they are merely actualizations of a substance which is actually given in the cultural structure. Our day may put the emphasis on "originality" because it has no spiritual substance.

Whether or not this conclusion is proper is not to be discussed here. We only wanted to give an example for the interpenetration of ethics and history. Whenever we ask a historical question we also ask an ethical question; and whenever we ask an ethical question we inquire into history. If in either field inquiry is to flourish, then an oscillation between the two is necessary.

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To ask for the relevance of Schleiermacher's work today is to ask an ethical question and a historical question at the same time. Schleiermacher and his time are for us what is usually considered "history" in so far as it is a time which has passed more than one-hundred years ago. Yet to ask for the relevance of this work today is to ask an ethical question, since

relevance means "usefulness." We assume that this work has something to contribute. Yet one may argue that we also ask an ethical question concerning Schleiermacher and a historical question concerning our situation, since we ask for the ethos in Schleiermacher's work in the light of which we want to understand our historical situation.

It is obvious that we cannot deal with this question in its entirety, since we are equipped neither to appraise our own historical situation nor to appraise the whole of Schleiermacher's work. We therefore have to limit ourselves to something particular on which we can exemplify contemporary problems and also the reasons for continuing Schleiermacher-research. The particular problem which we choose is that of the relation between faith and science (Wissenschaft), and we want to discuss it as a problem of Protestantism referring to Karl Barth as a chief exponent of Protestantism.

Karl Barth has formulated most strikingly the problem of the Church which follows the tradition of the reformers. Whether or not this tradition is what the reformers have intended is a question of infinite complexity. As matters stand today, the theology of the Reformation churches has entered a union with Kantian thought which - in its intricacy - is paralleled on the Roman Catholic side by the union of theology with Aristotelian thought as formulated by St. Thomas. In Barth's theology

"the Word of God" has become a principle which is over and beyond history and which stands in judgment upon history. Barth himself rejects Rudolf Bultmann's demythologizing, yet it seems obvious that the only ethics possible for the Barthian position is one that parallels Bultmann's "eschatological decision." In his discussion of history and creation Barth quotes from Ecclesiastes that "everything has its time," and he continues to comment that this feeling of life which approaches Epicureanism is proper for the Christian who knows that this world and this history is judged and does actually no longer exist; if the world does not yet lapse into nonbeing, it is only because of God's unsearchable longsuffering.[1] Whatever Barth's and Bultmann's differences may be, they both suggest a view of the ethics of formalism. There is no commitment to anything given; the action of man does not receive its value from his participation in creation. This view cannot possibly come to terms with the "matrix" of ethics. It cannot ask, for example, what is "good" in being a father or a mother, what is "good" in tilling the soil, what is "good" in administering the country; and it cannot come to terms at all with what is "wrong" with the depersonalization of industrial society. We do not want to suggest that Barth and Bultmann do not deal with

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[1]Karl Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik (Evangelischer Verlag: Zollikon-Zuerich, 1945), I, Part II, 76 f.

these problems; yet whenever it comes to a discussion of these matters, they either are inconsistent with their central affirmation or they cannot say anything of ultimate, positive relevance.

One can appreciate the situation and the concern of Barth. As a neo-Kantian the goodness of the given world is something beyond his reach (although he knows it "personally," as one can surmise from such exquisitely beautiful discussions as his treatment of Mozart). In Christ, however, ultimate reality has been revealed. Consequently, if this world with its history is meaningless, "the Word of God" is judgment. Everything natural is considered meaningless because the glory of Christ must be all in all. The kosmos which Barth knows is indeed without value. This view of the "evangelical truth" marks the opposition to Roman Catholicism. The Catholics with their Thomistic theology appear as seeking a compromise with this world. They retain a positive relation to natural law and build theology on this foundation as a superstructure. Gratia perficit naturam is anathema for consistent Protestant thought.

Consequently the relation between faith and knowledge, between theology and the other sciences cannot be positive. The sciences are, of course, concerned with this world and its forms of life. How could a theology which tends to be supranaturalistic find a positive relation to the sciences? There is absolutely no connection between "natural" reason and "supranatural" revela-

tion, neither a direct connection as in Thomistic thought nor a dialectical connection as in Schleiermacher's "contract."

Leaving aside for a moment the problem of the system of the sciences, we may ask what the separation of knowledge and faith means in the practical field. If "knowledge" and with it everything "natural" is banned from theological reflection, how then can theology come to terms with its most important section, namely with practical theology, and how is the minister to come to terms with the problems which practical theology is supposed to treat? Pastoral care does not have to do with "eschatological decisions" or with receiving a word of God which remains eternally transcendent; rather it has to do with nature, with people of flesh and blood for whom sin and forgiveness are actual realities here and now. The Logos was made flesh so that redemption is available to man (and, according to St. Paul, also to nature). In the Church which follows the reformers, however, it has become almost standard practice to think of justification as meaning that God justifies man by grace but that man remains nevertheless what he is; he is substantially not changed at all. Sanctification is "unevangelical." Is it then surprising when those powers of which the New Testament speaks as subordinated to Christ rise again as independent deities? If the realm of nature is left "neutral" instead of being sanctified, then it is "natural" that deities which are considered dead rise again and take over the vacant sections.

A religio-historical (religionsgeschichtlich) analysis of such movements as the Nazi movement could bring astonishing results; such movements are by no means atheistic. Quite the opposite is the case: they are resurrections of pagan deities. In what respects, for example, does the "order" of the Storm Troopers differ from the Babylonian Ishtar cult? It is necessary to take into account such wide-reaching ramifications in order to have an appreciation for the seemingly "academic" question of the relation between knowledge and faith, for Protestantism has to a large extent come to take "knowledge" as signifying the "natural" and "faith" as standing for the divine as something "supranatural," and it has great difficulties in relating the two.

It is not for us to decide whether or not Schleiermacher's "contract between science and faith" can be realized in the way in which he tried to achieve his goal. So much, however, seems to be obvious that his concern is ours just as much as it was his. Although it seems at the moment as if Schleiermacher's work is no longer relevant, he will probably receive great attention again as soon as Protestant theology becomes aware of the fact that nature and grace are a polarity which continues to exist, although it seemed for a time as if theology could do away with the nature-pole.

Schleiermacher thought of himself as a Protestant. In his relation to the Catholic Church with its Thomist mode of

thought he put the emphasis on the dialectical relation between knowledge and faith. The two form no straight line. One cannot proceed from natural knowledge to theological knowledge in a straight line, and the two together do not form a static structure. Instead, the sciences and theology are in dialectical relation with each other. But not only did he think of a different structure; for him also the elements which make the structure are different. Faith is not a system of beliefs, and thus theology is not a system of dogmas. For him faith is rather an immediate awareness of dependence and the "dogmas" are expressions of the various "modes" of this dependence. As such the feeling of dependence is without expression. If expressed in the form of a dogma, only one segment of it becomes articulated. If one could have a complete system of these dogmas, it would be related to the immediate awareness of the transcendent ground as the spectrum is related to the unbroken light of the sun. By the same token scientific truth is not dogmatic. The progress of the sciences as well as their internal unity rests not with the expansion of man's autonomous thought but rather with the constantly re-enacted integration of the sciences into dialectics, i.e., in man's search for God. There is, of course, such a thing as scientific progress within the sciences themselves in so far as each science builds upon the results which have been established before. Yet these very results will only be a "shadow of our limitedness" if they are not constantly related

to that moment when this limitation is overcome through the manifestation of the transcendent ground.

If Protestantism means the rejection of everything natural, then Schleiermacher is indeed not a Protestant (as Brunner and Barth would hold).[2] On the other hand, he is clearly not a Thomist in so far as for him the "system" remains at every moment in dialectical tension. One may interpret the split in the Christian Church which occurred in the sixteenth century as the separation into two parts. The Roman Catholic Church turned conservative; she considered it henceforth as her task to conserve the treasure which she had inherited from the Apostles. The Protestant Church, however, was aware of the change of time. She considered it her task to reinterpret the gospel in each new situation. While it is the danger of the Catholic Church to become stagnant, it is the danger of the Protestant Church to lose its substance. Schleiermacher's philosophical-theological work is the probably unique attempt in Protestantism to combine ultimate substance with infinite change. The interpenetration of being and change which he praised as the height of Platonic dialectics when discussing the Sophist and the Statesman is for him more than a dialectically interesting theory. His entire work is marked by the

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[2]Fleuckiger, op.cit., pp. 128 ff.

tendency to discover the substantial and the changing in their interpenetration. Thus his interest is equally with historical studies and with contemporary problems, and we have seen how his Dialektik strives to find a synthesis between the dialogue which must go on and the ultimate ground of the dialogue which is at rest. If it is true that "the Reformation must go on," then it is equally true that this constant change is necessary because of an ultimate, unchanging ground. We have mentioned Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann as exponents of Protestantism, and we have developed the difference between their approach and that of Schleiermacher. Yet they too are infinitely concerned for the discovery of the transcendent ground from which the Church lives regardless of the particular historical environment. As far as we understand the situation, these two thinkers do not draw the circle wide enough. Their dialectics does not include the interpenetration of change and being in actuality. The time, however, seems to be near when this problem has to be dealt with in full measure. We are confident that Schleiermacher's work will then become relevant, maybe to a larger extent than ever before.

Schleiermacher does not need to be defended. His work is of such respect-demanding stature that it will always be beyond what interpretation can achieve. Interpretation can only ask, inquire into, and meditate upon the thoughts which this

remarkable man has thought and spoken. To force an interpretation upon Schleiermacher's work is to bar the entrance. His thought moves in such subtle ways that one does not reach them if one is forceful. Like the blossoms of certain flowers, which close themselves when touched with raw hands, so Schleiermacher's work closes itself if it is not approached with sympathy and with an open mind. He, however, who is concerned with the ultimate questions of life and death and resurrection, and who is conscious of the responsibility of living in history, and who approaches Schleiermacher as one who is equally concerned, will find in him a companion on the pilgrimage of life, one who knows the hardships of the road but who nevertheless knows the goodness of the road because it leads home.

> Schleiermacher-research is not at its end, rather it has hardly commenced in truly methodical manner. As the understanding for the philosophic work of Schleiermacher gains in comprehensiveness, it will be recognized that Schleiermacher's foundation of religious consciousness is highly relevant for the new formulation of the problems of theology.[3]

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[3] Odebrecht, Blaetter fuer Deutsche Philosophie, VIII (1934-35), 301.

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